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## AESTHETIC ENERGY OF AN ORDINARY PLACE

Energy in the common and colloquial use of the word refers primarily to man and signifies man's willingness and ability to take intensive action, man's power and strength (Sobol 1997: 298). It is said that one can draw bad or good energy from people, that they radiate it or not. It is clearly visible in discussions about cities when urban heroes are promoted. There is a particular need to know who founded the given city, palace or factory. Less important is the fact whose energy helps to maintain the condition of the said urban structure. While writing about aesthetic energy of a place, I use the wider meaning of the word, referring to the whole aesthetic situation: the creator – the work – the recipient (Gołaszewska 1983: 48–64). It includes objective properties of specific objects or their complexes in the urban space, subjective characteristics of the capacity to act and impact others as well as the subjective ability to experience.

In contemporary sociologically and culturally oriented reflections on the city, a great deal of attention is paid to everyday practices of users of the city, simple walking around the city (Certeau 2008: 91–110), routine and sometimes ritual (i.e. shopping in a small local shop), activities performed on the way from home to work (Zukin 2009: 734–735), as well as normal actions such as sitting or looking at something somewhat aimlessly, especially at some trivial things (Mayol 2011: 5). However, it is hard not to note that the loudest debate is conducted about extreme cases: spectacular successes or revitalisation failures of radical reconstructions of city centres or impressive, controversial investments, as well as shameful neglect and devastation. We can, therefore, easily track actions of positive and negative “urban celebrities” (Rewers 2010: 7–9) – architects, urban planners and visionaries that transform the face of the city, originators of new institutions – and also see achievements of urban explorers (see, for example: Nieszczerska 2011; 2012). On the one hand, we have singular, vast and spectacular centres/institutions covered by multi-annual revitalisation programmes and private investments: Ksiezcy

Młyn (Priest's Mill), Manufaktura (Manufactory), Lodz Art Centre and EC1 Lodz City of Culture (Kazimierczak 2014); on the other hand, numerous Lodz courtyards (Orzechowska 2010, 2011), makeshift grocery shops or bizarre, exotic Chinese-Hawaiian-Mexican bars, wedding houses, etc. (Kozień, Miskowiec, Pankiewicz 2015).

Meanwhile, Lodz – similarly to other cities – consists of thousands of places which in daily practices of their inhabitants mean something important, being neither a cultural and commercial landmark of the city nor its anti-aesthetic stigma (the more terrible, the more interesting). Therefore, I wish to talk about an ordinary place, i.e. the place which: (1) through various types of step-by-step activities, independent of each other, becomes neater and more frequented; (2) used to evoke a sense of indifference before, but in everyday, mundane activities of a passer-by becomes popular, friendly, and even feels like his or her own; (3) forms the habit of observing the city in a more careful manner, arises interest in its history and, consequently, shows clearly how we keep the memory of the city; (4) stimulates expectations of order in the public space, positive aesthetic stimuli and further changes.

### **FIRST THERE WAS A MURAL ...**

Chronologically speaking, obviously first there was a street – Srednia Street, nowadays Pomorska – unusual and filled with magnificent buildings (to the subject of which I shall return). Nevertheless, the degree of destruction and demolition carried out in postwar Lodz made the whole sections of streets, after long years of falling into disrepair, seem grey, boring, and above all disfigured by unfortunate outbuildings obscuring the main structures. As is well known, “like all social practice, spatial practice is lived directly before it is conceptualized”, moreover it is: “directly lived through its associated images and symbols” (Lefebvre 1992: 34, 39). Thus, first at the intersection of Pomorska Street and Sterlinga Street (where I moved in), I was captivated by the mural which had been painted, at the invitation of the Urban Forms Foundation, by Spanish artist Arys in September 2011. It is a poor showpiece for the art historian living in Lodz for twenty years, fond of her city. I will try to explain this somehow. I was not a fan of murals (today I am a moderate one), or a researcher of this type of art. It was the first festival organised by this Foundation and there were only few murals in Lodz at the time. With great pleasure, I watched the process of creating the work, the technique of the artist who painted using a roller, gradually applying the colours, mixing them on the wall. I thought: it is just

a painter painting his picture, though sometimes he looked rather grotesque, acrobatic, and the effect was far from spectacular for a few days. Later I was most pleased and amazed by the fact that the mural was not destroyed. By the fact that in the city where almost everywhere hateful inscriptions of rival sports clubs compete with one another, nobody symbolically appropriated that surface. In December 2011, two lower buildings standing right in front of the wall with the painting by Aryz were demolished. Thus, the broad view of “The Love Letter” of the Spanish muralist was revealed. I remembered then that after all in the area:

### **THERE WAS ANOTHER MURAL FIRST**

Aryz created his work at 67 Pomorska Street (photo 4), while a large-format advertising from the communist era, recommending “fashionable and practical cotton, elastil and acrylic tracksuits produced by the Teodor Duracz Knitting Industry Plant called DELTA, existed at 61/63 Pomorska Street. Bartosz Stępień – a researcher of Lodz wall paintings of the old type – could not establish the author of the painting or the date of its creation (photo 19). The geometric form and literal representation of the product – “the T-shirts seem to be dancing around the letter »td«” (Stępień 2005) – testify to the fact that the work was created by an artist belonging to the so-called first generation of Lodz creators of wall advertising. They created a literal message, painting simply an assortment of the given shop. The characteristic feature was also the fact that they did not take advantage of the whole available surface and used muted colours. That generation, operating from the late 1950s to the mid 1960s, was seriously limited by the available financial and technical resources. At the time, this type of activity was not treated as either art or advertising. In the era (which the former communist name of Pomorska Street – Nowotki – appearing in this painting reminds us of) without the free market and opportunities for self-promotion outside the collective, artists were not sure whether they created paintings or murals. They used to say that they were “doing the walls” (Stępień 2010: 13). Incidentally, artists also use this term nowadays, which rather does a disservice to the modern generation of muralists.

The building with a historically interesting, but really unattractive painting, was demolished in December 2011. It revealed a bulky mass of a factory (65 Pomorska Street, photo 4).

## FIRST THEREFORE THERE WAS A FACTORY (ANOTHER ONE)

The Duracz Plant was established on the directive of the Minister of Light Industry on 18th July 1949<sup>1</sup>. The current owner of the property says that originally – since 1896 – entrepreneur Aron Landsberg had his wool waste weaving mill there (Koncept WS 2015). In 1920 “Setalana” silk article factory existed there, transformed in 1923 into a joint stock company which went bankrupt in 1936 (photo 4). Then, in 1937, the “Jedwabna” printing house, dyeing and fabric finishing plant operated in that place. In the course of the German occupation during World War II, Albert Seide and Co. ran a factory producing knitting materials on the premises (Bonisławski, Janik, Kusiński 2009: 282).

The main three-storey building of the factory fills the entire width of the long and narrow plot extending between the streets of Pomorska and Rewolucji 1905 and it divides the plot into two parts similar in size. The outbuildings, located until recently on its both sides, coming from various phases of expansion, had a negligible historical value so that only the left/east annex was retained from the front, thereby exposing the factory tower rich with avant-crops and adorned with an attic. The surviving annex building was in a very bad condition and necessitated a reconstruction of the third floor (photos 20, 21). The renovation of the whole structure was generally a great challenge in terms of adapting the facility for use, among others, due to the dense pillar structure of the halls and requirements arising from the modern fire safety regulations. Local newspapers and websites reproduced the headline “More office space in yet another factory. Now it is Pomorska” (Hac 2011), doubting the legitimacy of large-scale demolition and the purpose of the investment. According to architect Jakub Walczak (Archidotum Architect’s Office), due to the requirements of conservation and architectural structure of the building, multi-purpose – service, retail and office – use was assumed from the beginning, which was to also serve local residents. In practice, the buildings are currently used only to a small degree. At present, there are two popular discount stores (grocery and drugstore) located there, as well as a pharmacy and a popular ice cream shop serving desserts according to a traditional recipe (open only in summer).

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<sup>1</sup> Pursuant to Art. No. 1 of the Decree of 3rd January 1947 on the Establishment of State-owned Enterprises (Journal of Laws, No. 8, item 42), a state enterprise, which was managed on the basis of national economic plans, was founded. The decree also assumed that it should be involved in the production of knitted articles.

Apart from the stereotypical fears that were formulated with the start of the plot redevelopment, a hunger for information was aroused. The information about various factories began to be blurred in concise press notes, owners and objects confused. This is to some extent understandable. An average textile factory – although running specifically profiled production – usually consisted of a similar set of objects: an imposing multi-storey spinning mill, one-floor weaving mill with a saw-tooth roof and other less original and recognisable auxiliary buildings or structures in which the technological cycle was continued, such as dye-works, a printing house, etc. (Bonisławski, Janik, Kusiński 2009: 18). On the short stretch of Pomorska Street between the two intersections of Sterlinga and Kaminkiego, on only one side of the street – the odd-numbered one – four such complexes survived. One cannot see, however, too well the factory-related specificity of the street. Because:

### **FIRST THERE WAS A STREET – SREDNIA STREET**

Srednia Street was established as part of the New Town (Nowe Miasto), which was delineated in the years 1921–1923 for the purpose of settlement of cloth-makers – weavers of wool products (see: The plan of cloth-makers New Town colony as arranged by F. de Viebig in 1823 in Koter 1969: 60). The settlement of cloth-makers was the first, but one of many, and it was not the one that the fame of the city was built on: “At the heart of Lodz advancement to the primary textile centre in Eastern Europe and the second largest city in the country laid the decision about establishing the large, cotton and linen settlement of Lodz in its vicinity” (Koter 1969: 74). Piotrkowska Street became its development axis, which was the result of complex factors (Koter 1969: 89).

Pomorska is the longest street in Lodz (11,318 metres long), though this is not evident either. Not only because at 1,810 meter the street turns and its eastern panorama is closed today – creating an urban landscape – by the Green Horizon office building (2012). Former Srednia Street was laid out mechanically, contrary to the terrain layout (yet according to the harmonious, geometric vision of the New Town), which can also be seen in its present course. It intersects several successive elevations and depressions, which visually shortens its length. The plots of the cloth-makers’ settlement were long and narrow, with access to both streets that delineated them. This was to facilitate communication with gardens, which were to be added to the building sites on the outskirts of the settlement (Koter 1969: 62). Thus, during the most intensive development of the city (starting from the last quarter of the nineteenth century), when factories were created, wherever

there was a possibility of purchasing unclaimed sites, not only urban planning and aesthetic considerations, but even sanitary ones, were not taken into account. The random mixture of remains of old craftsmen's houses, usually located on the edge of the plot next to the street, and tenement houses rising above them, as well as hundreds of factories, created a city landscape different from the neoclassical, harmonious concept of the founders of early industrial Lodz. Apart from many nuisances of the city life at the time, nowadays we have the additional drawback connected with the fact that it is difficult to see the beauty of many of Lodz places at first glance.

### **“THE LOVE LETTER” AND ITS SURROUNDINGS**

A new mural or a renovated factory building cannot teach us history. A look at new or renovated elements of the urban landscape is not enough to make one feel like learning about it. The only thing that can be expected is that this aesthetic contrast will make one wonder why for many years things were different and why this particular place has changed. Undoubtedly, these changes may prove to be an aesthetic incentive to trigger memory. The outcome is not likely to be the antiquarian reconstruction of history but rather an active recollection, submission to a specific aura of the city and its paintings. The role of aesthetics in nurturing memory was pointed out by Walter Benjamin: “For the important thing to the remembering author is not what he experienced, but the weaving of his memory, the Penelope work of recollection [Eingedenken]. Or, should one call it, rather, the Penelope work of forgetting?” (Benjamin 2003: 238)<sup>2</sup>. In other words, the aesthetic experience can perhaps provide an excuse for the fragmentation of the manner in which we experience the city. The fact that there is something lacking in our memories, in our knowledge, as well as the physical tissue of the city makes our thoughts or feelings circle around that which is missing. It should be noted, however, that the mural is a very specific object placed in its own surroundings. It may serve well the place that it usually aesthetically appropriates – and it would be great if it affected the place in this manner. Murals, however, have become tourist attractions in their own right, they have even developed a certain type

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<sup>2</sup> “The Penelope work of recollection” in this essay does not appear in the context of the experience of the city, but in relation to the poetics of Marcel Proust. I refer here to, as I believe, the universal tension between memory and “efforts to forget”, brilliantly observed by Benjamin. The existence of this tension means that forgetting can play a constructive role and become “the warp” of working memory (Benjamin 2003: 238).

of recipient oriented towards the impression of scale and contrast, interested in comparisons and rankings. According to the authors of the famous book *The Tourists Gaze* “looking is a learned ability and that the pure and Innocent eye is a myth (...). Gazing is a performance that orders, shapes and classifies, rather than reflects the world” (Urry, Larsen 2011: 1–2). A tourist touring Lodz as the “city of murals” follows the number of objects, the variety of techniques, stylistic individuality. And animators of this type of art are more allied to the mural itself than to local residents, to spectacular views rather than socially successful places.

Let us return to “The Love Letter” at 67 Pomorska Street. Arys likes to build his compositions using low contrast colours, prefers cool pastel shades and colours separated with a thick contour. This mural surprisingly harmoniously blends in with the black window frames and the linear decoration of the renovated factory (photos 4, 18, 21). It will be an even better fit when the “lace” cast iron finial of the outbuilding is completed. The grey façade of the factory is broken by the blue colour, which takes on a violet hue in the sun, looking as if it was specially selected for the mural. The original colour was probably more muted, this choice, however, seems particularly fortunate in relation to the adjacent painting. The use of colour by the Spanish muralist is reminiscent of the way in which silk is dyed. The idea is to make the colours blend smoothly one into another, thus emphasising the softness of the fabric and its ability to reflect light. Arys aptly fits into the monotonous, “grey-greyish” tone of the city, at the same time – probably not quite intentionally – reflecting its nostalgic aesthetics. Thus, he has met the requirement that is so difficult to achieve by other muralists – that of authenticity. Most of the murals created in Lodz are based on various types of contrasts (Gralińska-Toborek, Kazimierska-Jerzyk 2014: 188–189). Here – the mural not only gently emerges out of the raw plaster of the wall – we have this naturalness also reinforced by the fact that in this area there has always been a mural, although a different one, but also pastel and also non-problematic in its content. It can be said that the mural looks familiar, that the painting seems to be in its place, as if it has always been there.

Authenticity – although often re-created, especially at the rhetoric level – is a widely desired value in promoting quality of products (especially food), as well as places. In general, it can be said that the product and the place of its manufacture are inseparable, if they are to be authentic (Beverland, Lindgreen, Vink 2008: 5–15). Therefore, in this case what is important is not only the atmosphere of the dormant element of post-industrial city but the integration with the place, and thus to some extent with its history. Lodz practically has no other history than the growth of its textile industry. It has no ancient history, very rudimentary medieval history, the history of the Old Town is largely forgotten



and the memory of it destroyed (Kazimierska-Jerzyk 2015). What is it then that authenticity of references to old Lodz should rely on? In the current experience of the urban space, neither the reinstatement of the city's history nor the reference to its industrial heyday plays a significant role. The paradox of authenticity lies in the fact that passing the unused factory areas, we did not perceive them as assets. Those places did not evoke a sense of admiration in passers-by. As such places were numerous and similar, we had no great expectations towards them. It should also be noted that the period of the city's most intensive development and the related legacy are not only glorious: "Due to the fact that the industry is spread across the whole area of the city, Lodz has received the title of »the city of chimneys«, and is also referred to as »Polish Manchester«, [but] it becomes an ugly, crippled city characterised by extremely arduous life" (Koter 1969: 108). Only from the perspective of the economic crisis which closed for good the era of the city of factories and chimneys, a single factory comes alive as a medium of intense aesthetic as well as cognitive and historical experiences. This is a much more general problem. Sharon Zukin draws attention to it in an interesting manner: "We can only see spaces as authentic from outside them. Mobility gives us the distance to see a neighborhood in terms of the way it looks, enables us to hold it to an absolute standard of urbanity or cosmopolitanism, and encourages us to judge its character apart from any personal history or intimate social relationships we have there. The more connected we are to its social life, especially if we grew up there, the less likely we are to call a neighbourhood authentic" (Zukin 2009: 728).

The above-mentioned association – connecting the mural with the silk factory – is accidental in this place. Nobody familiarised Arys with the history of the place or the factory. The factory was not even then listed in the register of monuments and did not have its description card (it was created along with the reorganisation of the land for redevelopment). The aim of the Urban Forms Foundation, responsible for the creation of the mural, was at the time the creation of paintings autonomous in relation to the surrounding space. This point of view – that murals are to embellish the city, that artists do not have any obligations towards the people, and that animators do not have to explain that which is produced – prevailed for quite a long time in the Foundation's activities. The trivial subject of a youth love affair could pass for a stereotypically easy, neutral, pop culture topic. It was more important that Arys would be painting in Lodz. For recipients, the artist's brand is of secondary importance. The qualitative study conducted in 2013 aimed at identifying what components of aesthetic experience play a major role indicates that the artist's identity is of no importance, even though he uses a very clear signature (Gralińska-Toborek,



Kazimierska-Jerzyk 2014: 263). What attracts the recipient in this case is primarily the subjectivity of the figure presented. I personally feel like passing a familiar face, someone close. The last thought that comes to my mind is that someone imposed one of the paintings from their gallery on me. Passing this place, I think: “Our street, our girl, our Arys, our three minutes of pleasure” (Ibid.: 181). Others also think that the girl “belongs” in here (Ibid.: 228). The author of the popular blog devoted to promoting cycling tours in the city of Lodz and around the Lodz region wrote during the process of renovating the factory: “the girl by Arys is diligently recording what still remains to be done” (*Mr Scott...*). The very image of human figure reinforces this kind of identification with the representation. We touch here upon an important issue which is not satisfactorily theorised in culture: “Anthropologists and folklorists used to devote a great deal of energy – far more than they do now – to two related phenomena: first, the belief that inert objects were (or could be) invested with souls or inhabited by spirits (either good or bad); and second, the tendency to attribute living character to what appear to most of us to be inanimate objects” (Freedberg 1991: 284). As noted by David Freedberg, this issue in regard to religious experiences perplexes and exposes to ridicule. In the case of urban space, it has its source not in a vision, which is an unusual phenomenon, but in everyday encounters with the image. Thus, it is more difficult to explain. The very figure of the girl in “The Love Letter”, especially her face, is – admittedly – quite peculiar. She lacks all the faults that Georg Simmel wrote about considering the aesthetic features of human image:

Of all the part of the human body, the face has the highest degree of this kind of inner unity. The primary evidence of this fact is that a change is limited, actually or apparently to one element of the face – a curl of the lips, an upturning of the nose, a way of looking, a frown – immediately modifies its entire character and expression. Aesthetically, there is no part of the body, whose wholeness can as easily be destroyed by the disfigurement of only one of its elements. For this is what unity out of and above diversity means: that fate cannot strike any one part without striking every other part at the same time as if through the root that bind the whole together (...). The fact that in the face mere bodily weight need not be overcome to any noticeable degree strengthens the impression of its spirituality (Simmel 1973: 336).

The girly silhouette with an austere facial expression and peaceful gestures does not refer the recipient to screen celebrities; she is not looking straight ahead, staring or opening her mouth, she is not communicating anything specific or calling to action, but is so suggestive that accompanies the passer-by – glancing and shuffling pieces of paper, “just living in such a house” – as one of the passers-by says (Gralińska-Toborek, Kazimierska-Jerzyk 2014: 228).

This interesting process of internalisation of the image and its enigmatic authenticity may be also partly rooted in the attitude of the artist. Aryz notes that: “When one paints in the street, one knows that the mere presence of the work gives more merit, attracts more attention and the process is automatic because the space helps you to build and adapt it. [...] On a wall you are making a contribution to the wall, you just make an intervention in a punctual manner, because the support is the context” (Aryz 2011). It is worth noting that he is not speaking here about the knowledge of the history of the place, but rather about the properties of the medium, which is the wall. Thus, he draws attention to the fact that what surrounds the artist in the given area (architecture, traffic, people’s behaviour) always projects a universal, intuitively understood message which should be followed. The temporary presence of muralists at the place where their works are created is frequently pointed out. The fact that murals are most successful in under-capitalised places is also stressed. In this context, the graffiti origins of this genre of art, which allow certain freedom and exempt from liability, can be seen. Zukin reminds us about another side of this situation, which is in fact preferred by artists: “Artists also derive satisfaction from performing a creative life in spaces that remain distant from both the popular commercial mainstream and high culture venues” (Zukin 2009: 729). When Aryz was working in Pomorska Street, this part of the city was the so-called “clearance space” (Sennett 2009: 57–58). This kind of space is characterised by natural openness and power of attraction, as well as neglect and disorder, therefore an artistic intervention, even unsuited to the surroundings, seems very desirable.

The surroundings of the mural by Aryz have changed radically over the last four years, yet the painting has not lost – in my opinion – its authenticity. Currently, the entire intersection of Pomorska and Sterlinga looks impressive. In the framework of the municipal programme “Mia100 kamienic” (“The City of Townhouses”), two townhouses at 9 Sterlinga Street and 59 Pomorska Street (in the western corners of the intersection) have been completely renovated. The first townhouse, with a rich eclectic detail, was built at the beginning of the twentieth century as a residential building and will remain one after the renovation. The townhouse located on the opposite side of Pomorska houses medical clinics situated next to the Stefan Rydygier hospital. It is colouristically harmonised with the mural and the former “Setalana” factory, co-creating along the south side of the intersection a relatively uniform, restrained in its form complex of buildings and decorations. On the north side, a new nine-storey office building emerges in the background (Hines Poland) at 8A Sterlinga Street, covering the area of 20 thousand square meters. Individual investors as well as the City Hall, focused on the revitalisation of not only individual objects but entire quarters, say that this

area has been given a second life. This revitalisation may actually contribute to the creation of a socially successful place here. It is not, however, such a place yet, nor is it a neighbourhood. And this concept is probably the key to understanding and transforming the area.

The neighbourhood does not have fixed boundaries or markings. It is, however, perceived as friendly, close and familiar in the direct experience of life; it can be narrowed down or expanded. It transcends time and space in the sense that both concepts have no rigid boundaries and they are perceptible only in the current activity of a given community of people. The problem is that instead of a bustling downtown district, Lodz has long streets. Some people believe that Pomorska (similarly to Piotrkowska Street) has even a tourism potential. It results from the material culture heritage, specific for this street: its numerous monuments and historic urban layout (Wojtkiewicz 2008: 196). After the narrow plots of cloth makers and their gardens began to serve a richer community of factory owners and merchants, Srednia Street became an impressive looking street (Stefański 2001: 113). It is here that the first bank had its headquarters. The Commercial Bank (Bank Handlowy), which was located in the former mansion of Karol Gebhardt, was distinguished at the time by its vast, picturesque surroundings: a courtyard and a driveway on the street side (Ibid.: 73). The most stately and prestigious building of the city – the seat of the Municipal Credit Society (Miejskie Towarzystwo Kredytowe) was built (1878–1881) nearby<sup>3</sup> (Ibid.: 78, 113). In the immediate vicinity of the intersection, one can also see the building of the “Talmud-Torah” Jewish School of Crafts (Żydowska Szkoła Rzemiosł “Talmud-Tora”) (currently the building of the Department of Educational Sciences, University of Lodz, unfortunately restored only to a very reduced degree), constructed on the initiative of the Jewish Charity Society (Żydowskie Towarzystwo Dobroczynności) in 1901, based on the design of the greatest Lodz architect of the turn of the century – Gustav Landau-Gutenteger (1870–1917).

Although former Srednia Street is nowadays primarily the street of schools and university institutions teeming with student or typically urban life, there are no cafés, gardens, little nooks and places where one can spend time. For

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<sup>3</sup> The Lodz branch was the second in the country (after Warsaw) and was a very important institution for the development of the city, especially its housing. The main entrance was preceded by a portico supported by columns where the driveway was located. The decoration of the façade, containing the words “VIRIBUS UNITIS” and sculptural allegories of the city, commerce, industry, law and fortune, expressed the ideals of Lodz industrialists and traders (Stefański 2001: 113).

several years now we have enjoyed the sight of some restored monuments, whose previously removed decorations, grand entrances, driveways and finials have been restored. The perception of this special beauty and its appreciation in the long, narrow and historically monotonous street of Pomorska is impossible due to – as has been mentioned before – the lie of the land. This is also – as is illustrated by the fate of Piotrowska, the street which could not withstand the competition from the Manufactory Market – much more difficult than in the case of a clearly outlined centre. It – as is well known – plays important roles: integrating, enabling coordination of activities and allowing symbolic identification. As noted by Emanuel Castells, “This vision of the centre is not entirely naive one. There is the idea of urban community” (Castells 228). It is, therefore, worth trying to recreate these values of the urban centre on a microscale. A number of heavily frequented public buildings and two relatively large (for an intersection) green squares at its eastern corner are located at the intersection discussed here. One square is clean but private, completely fenced, the other is adjacent to yet another cheap discount grocery shop and is very neglected, obscured by makeshift kiosks. Thus, familiarity and strangeness mix in this space; when one fragment opens, the other closes; when one becomes beautiful, the other strikes with its lack of fit. As long as this space consists of suppositions, it will not become a neighbourhood as “the spatiality of man consists of (...) [...] being close to things” (Buczyńska-Garewicz 2006: 122). These fragments of the space of the excluded, either because of the fencing or the dirt and the discomfort of use, make it impossible to transform the area into a socially attractive and aesthetically identified place.

One can also wonder to what extent the same street could become such a place serving as a tract, since it has good transportation, functionally conducive residential housing as well as numerous schools, university buildings and high-end office buildings. The visual potential of this part of the city is not exploited and is probably not well understood. Recently, another factory with a rich history – the former M. Tykociner i s-ka wool spinning and artificial wool manufacturing plant has been impressively renovated. Its red-brick exterior – for a change – has been restored and its surroundings are now being tidied up (77 Pomorska Street, photos 31, 32). Soon the area will be redeveloped. Right next to it, a third cheap grocery discount shop on this block is being constructed. Two more murals were created this autumn on behalf of the City in its close proximity. One of the murals was painted on the other side of townhouse no. 67 (fortunately it is not very visible), the other on a stately residential building constructed on the initiative of the said Lodz Jewish Charity Society (Łódzkie Żydowskie Towarzystwo Dobroczynności) after 1898. It

depicts a sea wave. Apart from the fact that it graphically interferes with the proportion of the architectural shape of the building, it includes the simplest graphic symbol that can be applied to the street name. The current name has nothing to do with the history of the city and is supposed to commemorate the patriotic ceremony of “Poland’s Wedding to the Sea”, related to the recovery of access to the sea by Poland. This time, imagination does not create around the murals a network into which one could weave some threads of memory or urban history. The opportunity to do so was favourable as the building (not the only one in Pomorska Street) was designed by above-mentioned Landau-Gutenteger. Moreover, Lodz Jewish Charity Society was a thriving institution, attracting through its activities some really unconventional individuals. The mural of a Chinese man by Daleast – who probably learnt only about the name of the street – provokes extreme reactions. Some people are waiting for him to finally finish it, while others praise it for the delicate drawing technique. Almost a twin mural, called “The Ocean”, was made by the same artist a year earlier in Australia. The technique which is used by Daleast consists in a double illusion, which can be appreciated: he creates representational works composed of other representational elements. Thus, in 2014 he created a deer made of twigs in Lodz (10 Łąkowa). The sea wave, which consists of small wavelets, does not evoke the same pleasure associated with shape oscillation. Moreover, its asymmetrical composition makes the building “lean” to the side. Finally, let us consider the message whose clarity the residents demand. Daleast called his first Lodz work “The Urban Forms Gallery Mural”, and the other “The Urban Mural”. Thus, the titles present only the names of the patrons. If anyone had doubts that too much political significance was attributed to murals, then the case of this artist shows unfortunately what/who is the proper subject of this exposition. And, it must be admitted that Pomorska has extraordinary expositional qualities. If the originators of the murals have the ambition to create a municipal gallery, it is necessary to recall the meaning of the word “to expose” whose triple meaning is explicated by Mieke Bal: *exposition*, *exposé*, *exposure*. Certain important obligations that are associated with an art exhibition as a collection of works should be recalled in this context:

The most obvious place where these three areas of exposition are integrated, and doubtlessly the reason for the current attention to museums, is the actual, concrete, “literal” exhibition of things in museums and galleries. So, that is where I will begin. These things are selected, ordered, explained, and made “readable” on the basis of arguments which often remain unarticulated, but which tend to be related to a particular kind of use value. One such value is aesthetics, another one is knowledge, including historical knowledge (Bal 1999: 5).

Sometimes the aesthetic value of the city and its history are not able to break through arbitrary interventions of artists and investors. In general, however, these values need to be cultivated by the power of our commitment to the past.

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