

WORKSHOPS FOR ISRAELI AND POLISH YOUTH

"HOW TO READ A WORK OF ART? WHAT DO THE VISUAL ARTS SAY ABOUT THE CULTURE OF POLES, JEWS AND ISRAELIS?"

"GRODZKA GATE – NN THEATRE CENTRE", LUBLIN 2010.

BY: ALEXANDRA DUŻ, ANNA KISZKA, JAKUB WYDRZYŃSKI.

TRANSLATION: HEBREW – MIRIAM BORENSTEIN, ENGLISH – MILENA MIGUT.



The workshop deals with an issue of Polish and Jewish visual arts, aiming to build a platform for discussion about their relations. It allows integration of the young people from Israel and Poland and gives an opportunity to discover similar themes in works of Polish and Jewish artists of Polish origin. During the workshop, participants play the roles of art historians, artists and art critics. They work together and create a gallery and collages, which enables the cooperation of Israeli and Polish youth.

The workshop aims to show both Poles and Israelis the common shared cultural heritage. This element of cultural identity commit to continue the Polish-Israeli dialogue, also on the field of art.

Workshop time: 90 min.

Target group: students of secondary schools in Poland and Israel.

Number of participants: 20-40 people.

Number of working groups: 4.

After the workshops, participants will be able to:

- describe the works of art of Jewish artists of Polish origin (from the first half of XIX Century till 1939),
- discuss on selected works of contemporary Israeli and Polish art, to compare them and find similarities/differences,
- express critical views on contemporary Israeli and Polish art, referring to historical events and participate in a discussion on this topic,
- identify the common elements of the cultural heritage of Israel and Poland,
- use different sources of information.

References:

1. Photos: www.raster.art.pl (access: March 2010); http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Strona_glowna (access: March 2010);
2. Biographies of artists: <http://webart.omikron.com.pl/paint/authors/index.htm> (access: March 2010); <http://www.zwoje-scrolls.com/zwoje26/text12p.htm> (access: March 2010);
3. www.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leopold_Pilichowski (access: March 2010); www.kazimierz-news.com.pl (access: March 2010);
4. Reproductions of paintings and prints: <http://webart.omikron.com.pl/paint/authors/index.htm> (access: March 2010); <http://www.zwoje-scrolls.com/zwoje26/text12p.htm> (access: March 2010), Artur Tanikowski, *Jewish painters in Poland*, part. 1, Warsaw 2006.

Needed materials:

- envelopes A4 (10 pieces),
- sheets of black 100x35 paper (half of the B1) (4 pieces), fixing mass (1 pack),
- markers, markers, crayons,
- scissors (4 pieces), glue sticks (4 pieces),
- self-adhesive labels (20-40 pieces),
- colored paper (4 blocks), grey paper (4 sheets).

Workshop

Introduction to the workshop (5 min.)

The moderator greets participants and informs, that during the workshop they would learn about Polish artists of Jewish origin and would try to interpret different works of art.

1. Exercise – Write your name (10 min.)

Needed materials: self-adhesive labels (20-40 pieces).

Participants sit in a circle. Each person receives a self-adhesive label and writes his/her name in their own language. The Poles ask the Israelis, how to write their names in Hebrew and write the names of Israelis in Polish. As a result, each participant has a label with his/her name written in two languages. All participants stand in a circle and read their names loud.

2. Exercise – Art historians prepare an exhibition (10 min. preparation + 15 min. overview of the exhibition)

Needed materials: 4 sheets of black paper, fixing mass, annexes 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, 1.6.

The moderator divides all the participants into 4 mixed groups. Each group receives an envelope, a sheet of black paper and some fixing mass. The moderator asks participants to imagine, that they are art historians who are to prepare an exhibition of the works of Jewish artists of Polish origin, basing on the collection of a local museum (works of art from the mid-nineteenth century till 1939).

The moderator informs, that the sheets of black paper are the "walls of a gallery" – each group has one such "wall". There are pictures, their titles and a set of special questions in the envelopes:

envelope 1 – religious painting [annex 1.1],
envelope 2 – biblical painting [annex 1.2],
envelope 3 – portraits [annex 1.3],
envelope 4 – landscapes and cityscapes [annex 1.4].

Participants are invited to match the titles to the paintings and hang them on the walls of the "gallery". Participants also have to prepare a short presentation of their galleries, basing on questions, they got. The moderator has strips of paper with forms of painting written on them: "Landscapes and cityscapes", "Portrait", "Religious paintings", "Biblical painting" [annex 1.5].

Participants choose one of the names, read aloud by the moderator, and think about answers to questions from the envelopes. The moderator asks a representative of each group to present shortly a part of the gallery:

- What do the paintings represent?
- What style/era do they represent?
- What is particularly worth attention in these images?

In conclusion, the moderator points out, that all the images were made by Jewish artists in some way connected to Poland (by place of birth/work), although some of them were traveling and searching inspiration in different parts of the world. Many of them were fascinated by modern art (Impressionism, Expressionism, Cubism, Fauvism) and refused to paint in a realistic way.

At the end of the conversation the moderator may ask, why Jewish artists were not that active before XIX century. The main reason is the Jewish Enlightenment movement – Haskalah.

[Additional information about selected artists and images used in this exercise can be found in annex 1.6].

3. Exercise – Artists create collages (15 min. + 20 min. for presentation)

Needed materials: drawing materials, 4 glues, colored paper, 4 sheet of grey paper, set of 4 images, annex 2.1

Participants remain in groups. In this exercise they are artists, who have to make a collage. Participants will tell through this collage about themselves, about the world in which they live or would like to live. This needs to be the world, that can identify both Poles and Israelis. The moderator asks participants to imagine, that in dozens / hundreds of years there would be not much remaining from the world of XXI century. This collage would enable to represent the current reality.

Each group receives an envelope with a set of:

- 4 images (already known from a former exercise) [moderator decides in advance which images to choose],
- 12 photographs of various aspects of the culture of modern Israel and the Poland (6 pairs of similar themes) [annex 2.1],

Each team receives drawing materials, glue, colored paper and a sheet of grey paper, on which the collage will be created. After 15 min., the moderator asks the representatives of the groups to present their collages.

4. Exercise – Art critics discuss about contemporary artistic activities (7 min. work in groups + 7 min. joint discussion)

Needed materials: annexes 3.1.

Participants continue to work in groups. Each group is given an envelope with the same content – a set of photographs of two contemporary art projects (in Israel and Poland) and questions about these photos [annex 3.1]. Participants watch the pictures and try to answer the attached questions.

Participants meet in a circle, show their pictures and tell about them (answering the questions, they got). The moderator leads a discussion about contemporary art:

Questions for a discussion:

- Do the photographs taken by the artists are only a provocation, or do they have any hidden meaning?
- Does quoting such well-known historical photos of war heroes insult them or rather extend the memory of them?
- What was the aim of using such historical quotations by the artists in their work? What do they want to say in this way?

Summary of the workshop

The moderator reminds the main names and titles of works of art used during the workshop and asks participants to shortly evaluate the workshop.