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The Survivors and the Rescuers: How the Memory of Shoah functions in the Artistic Realizations of the Grodzka Gate Center in Lublin

*This year, on the sixtieth anniversary of the uprising in the Warsaw Ghetto, the director of the Grodzka Gate – NN Theater Center in Lublin Tomasz Pietrasiewicz was distinguished with the Medal of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising. For “preserving and reproducing through artistic means the memory of the coexistence in historic Lublin of two nationalities: Poles and Jews”.*¹

The Grodzka Gate Center's mission is to reconstruct a time of coexistence, the Holocaust period included, and this it does by fulfilling an artistically coherent program that is also consistent from the theoretical point of view. In this paper I have set myself the task of analyzing selected artistic undertakings of the NN Theater referring directly to the memory of survivors and rescuers during the Shoah.

I am interested in the artistic reconstruction of various historical narrations, but primarily in the philosophical sense of the work of memory on the most difficult period in the coexistence of Poles and Jews.

¹ G. Józefczuk, “Za pamięć współistnienia” (*Gazeta Wyborcza*, Lublin edition), 22 April 2003, p. 5. The founder and director of the Grodzka Gate Center received this prestigious distinction awarded by the Jewish Combatants and Victims of WWII Organization to individuals “with exceptional merit in the cause of reconciliation, mutual understanding and harmonious coexistence between Poles and Jews”. Significantly, the distinction for “the memory of coexistence” was awarded on an anniversary that recalls a time when a centuries-long harmonious coexistence between Poles and Jews, but also including, as in pre-war Lublin, the Ukrainians, Germans, Gypsies and Tartars, was brutally severed.

These aims are limited in topical and analytical range and obviously incapable of providing an exhaustive discussion of the rich and varied activities of the Grodzka Gate Center.² The paper has a dual structure, consisting of published excerpts from the script of artistic actions and a philosophical and aesthetical interpretation.

The honoring of Tomasz Pietrasiewicz with the Medal of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising prompts me to begin my presentation of the art of the Grodzka Gate Center with artistic projects undertaking the themes of the tragic fate of the Lublin ghetto.

March 16, 2002, was the sixtieth anniversary of the liquidation of the first ghetto in the territory of the Nazi General Government, the Lublin ghetto. "Operation Reinhard" started with the deportation of Jews from Lublin and Lvov to Bełżec (Belsec). In the camps at Majdanek, Bełżec and Sobibór, about 1,410,000 prisoners perished, most of them of Jewish origin.

The Grodzka Gate – NN Theater Center evoked the memory of the liquidation of the Lublin ghetto with a number of undertakings. Let me begin by describing an artistic installation.

GATE TO A GHOST TOWN

Description

On March 16, at exactly 6 p.m., all lights will be switched off on the side of the Grodzka Gate where the Jewish Town had once existed. Two symbolic spaces

² The Grodzka Gate – NN Theater center is an independent cultural institution, operated under the aegis of local self-government structures in Lublin since 1990, when the NN theater was established, and transformed into an artistic, social and educational center in 1998. The undertakings of the Center are determined by its artistic mission, which is to restore the memory of a bicultural Lublin, particularly the non-existent Jewish town. The Center organizes exhibitions, which constitute in principle the documentation of artistic realizations, forming in consequence a veritable Theater of Memory. The program "The Great Book of the City", started in 1998, is connected with the history of Polish-Jewish Lublin: it is accompanied by an educational program. One part of the program is devoted to the reconstruction of the Jewish district. The Center publishes a periodical, *Scriptores*, and runs its own website informing about the history of the NN Theater and the Center, current artistic undertakings, educational projects and workshops. The Center cooperates with many regional and international institutions, publishes extensive informative and documentary materials. A volume of *Scriptores* (the first in the new formula) has been devoted to the subject discussed here. Cf. *Scriptores*, 1/2003 (27), vol. 20, Year XI.

– light and darkness – will thus be created on either side of Grodzka Gate. Slides of old photographs depicting non-existent streets, houses, people, who are no longer here, will be projected onto the Gate walls. The characteristic sounds of that city will be heard: voices calling in Yiddish, haggling in the market, the clatter of horses' hooves.³

Grodzka Gate is a special place where for ages the Christian Upper Town had met with the Jewish Lower Town. The gate stands halfway between the former St. Nicholas Square and the Seer of Lublin Square. Both in the real topography of the town and in mythical space, the Gate is a material and metaphysical boundary between two worlds, a place of passage. That which simultaneously joins and divides. Being a border, a boundary, is the Gate's principal property, as Władysław Panas writes in his fine essay on the Gate.⁴

In past centuries the Gate was an important element, a central point of the bicultural fabric of the city of Lublin. The Shoah stripped the Gate of its distinctive features; after the liquidation of the Jewish Lower Town, the horizontal order was disturbed and in the vertical order, the memory of the gate lost all those connotations that issued from its historical location within urban space.

The memory of this specific place underwent processes of individualization and stereotypization. The story of the Gate was incorporated into the Polish history of the Lublin hill that went back to myths about a pagan place of cult and terminated with Józef Czechowicz's fascination with the spot. A commendable history, worthy of memory. A strong narration about the world which has survived, a world understood in the language of national symbolism, with clear tropes prompted by the location of the gate in the urban space (the axis running from the Old Town to the Lublin Castle).

It was this mythical history so deeply saturated with Polish national symbolism that was subjected to reinterpretation in the artistic realization *Gate to a Ghost Town*. After all, the symbolic darkness on the side of the Jewish Town will not be lighted up by a single explanatory and widely accepted story. All that appears are shadows, post-images, reflections

³ Descriptions of artistic events are quoted after projects published on the Grodzka Gate Center's website.

⁴ Cf. W. Panas, "Brama", in: *Pamięć – Miejsce – Obecność. Współczesne refleksje nad kulturą i ich implikacje pedagogiczne*, eds. J.P. Hudzik, J. Mizińska, Lublin: UMCS, 1997, p. 17.

of our remembering of a world that has disappeared. We have at our disposal memory which is deceptive and knowledge which is incomplete; our beacons are superstition and “prejudgment”.

Explaining history in terms of values and ideas is inevitable. “The horizon, on which I construct myself, is so labile that the thread between that which was and which I remember and that which is and which I strive for can easily be broken. The question remains unanswered: Am I creating history in order to find myself or, quite the contrary, is history despite its plethora of gaps and distortions forming me?”⁵

In contemporary culture the history that constructs the subject is medial history. Employing (still existing) slides and photographs of a non-existent city as a means of expression leads to the reflection that perhaps the past is becoming an accidental collection of images, a collection without an author which is merely a photographic *simulacrum*.

Is not the *Gate to a Ghost Town* a form of creating a nostalgic unreal time, a way of introducing us to a story that is taking place in a more or less undefined past, as if it were outside of history which has its continuation?⁶

The second interpretation trope is set by the stereotype of collective national consciousness described above, a stereotype that is based on the strategy of exclusion.

National stereotype and subjectless medial history are not the sole threats to memory. Having stripped the Lublin Gate of its connection with the history of the Jewish Lower Town, one can perform yet another appropriation of memory. One may – in the phenomenological sense – concentrate on the very essence of the gate, on why a gate is a gate. Just as in Czechowicz's photographs of the Grodzka Gate we see nothing but the opening of the gate: “two-way transit opening (...) the essence of this place. (...) The opening and beyond it – light, brilliance. The passage appears as an exit from darkness. Every passage through the slit of the Gate, in both directions”.⁷

After the liquidation of the Jewish part of the town, the Grodzka Gate loses the light on one side. Even so, it remains a gate; it retains its essence

⁵ B. Skarga, “W drodze”, in: *Tożsamość i różnica. Eseje metafizyczne*, Kraków: Znak, 1997, p. 237.

⁶ Cf. F. Jameson, “Postmodernizm i społeczeństwo konsumpcyjne”, in: *Postmodernizm. Antologia przekładów*, ed. R. Nycz, Kraków 1997, pp. 200–201.

⁷ Panas, op. cit., p. 21.

as a place of passage. The phenomenological analysis indicates the incidental aspect of goals, the fortuity of history, the casual nature of fate. Ahistorism is the opposite of the process of the “theatralization of history”. What causes such violation of memory?

Habit foremost, for it “does not recreate the past, but only reenacts it”. Habits are assumed from others, from the community which inculcates us in specific behaviors and ways of thinking. Secondly, there is forgetfulness as a means of escape from the improper (as in Heidegger’s interpretation), from the disquieting. In analogy to the principle of psychoanalytical repression, the “I” retreats from the factuality of that which was.

Freud’s “work of remembering” could be a therapy for the break with the past. Ricoeur even believes that such a “reworking” of the past is the task of history today. Just the existence of opposing narrations of the past is of educational value. It teaches the presentation of past events from different points of view, taking into consideration the memory of victims and oppressors, the memory of the rescuers and the survivors, people belonging to groups other than ours. Since the mechanism of creating memory is devoid of internal regulators referencing to the memories of others, and indeed it is governed by quite the opposite principle, that of “mine”, the realization of a methodical postulate for the pluralism of memory is exceptionally difficult. The French philosopher cited above even says that “many communities experience the need for a symbolic appeasement of their fears and hatreds”.⁸

The artistic project *One World – Two Temples* undertakes the difficult task of “reworking the past” marked by the Shoah.

ONE WORLD – TWO TEMPLES

Description

Artistic undertaking accompanying the Congress of Christian Culture,
September 16, 2000.

A group of Jewish young people will stand on the spot where the Great Synagogue had stood, and a group of young people from Lublin will take up

⁷ Panas, op. cit., p. 21.

⁸ P. Ricoeur, “Pamięć – Zapomnienie – Historia”, in: *Tożsamość w czasach zmiany. Rozmowy w Castel Gandolfo*, preparation and foreword K. Michalski, Kraków: Znak, 1995, p. 34.

position on the spot of the foundations of the Parish Church. Between the “living temples” thus constructed and the Grodzka Gate, two chains will be formed of people standing shoulder to shoulder. The chain from the Gate to the church will be made of people distinguished with the “Righteous Among the Nations” medal for saving Jews in wartime. On the other side of the Gate, the chain to the Synagogue will be formed of Jews saved from the Holocaust and the families of the survivors. Earth will be dug from the places where the synagogue and the church had stood, by Rabbi Michael Schudrich from the area of the synagogue and by archbishop Józef Życiński from the spot of the church. The earth shall be placed in vessels and handed down the chain of the Survivors on one side and the Righteous on the other side until it reaches the Grodzka Gate. It will then be mixed by two children, a Polish and a Jewish teenager, and by Father Romuald Jakub Weksler-Waszkinel, who as a Jewish child survived the Holocaust, rescued by a Polish family. Two grapevines will be planted in this soil, one in Lublin and the other in Rishon Le-Zion, symbolizing the non-existent temples.

The non-existent Great Synagogue and St. Michael’s Parish Church are symbols of a town whose memory has been annihilated by the Shoah.⁹ They had stood on either side of the Grodzka Gate. Today, a busy street runs through the site of the synagogue and an empty square marks the place of the church. The project of the Grodzka Gate Center stages two “living shrines” in the urban space, thus restoring symbolically the interrupted continuity of history and Memory. Each of the places brought back to life by a veritable mystery ritual can be a model of the world built on the foundations of faith.

The authors of the staging refer to a mythical tradition, treated as a source of life-giving force. But the distance between people today and the past

⁹ The Great Synagogue in Lublin, the construction of which started already in 1567, bore the name of Maharshal, one of the greatest Talmud scholars. The fame of Jewish Lublin is linked to this place as a great intellectual center, which attracted the most prominent scholars of the Talmud or Jewish law. The Hassidic synagogue, Bethamidrash de Chassidim, is connected with Yaakov Yitzchak Horowitz-Shternfeld, the Seer of Lublin; it was the chief Hassidic center in central Poland in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. For religious Jews Lublin was until the liquidation of the Jewish town their “Jerusalem”, to the sacred places of which they have kept pilgrimaging even today. Of no less importance for the Christian part of the town was the parish church of St. Michael the Archangel, raised to collegiate status in 1574. The foundation story reported by Długosz of the heavenly vision of Leszek the Black is the source of many symbolic readings, including that of M. Czechowicz in the essay *Kościół niewidzialny* (Invisible Church).

treated in this manner is clearly suggested. The act of remembrance is essential. That is why the animation of faith and tradition requires a passage which is a symbol of exculpation, of spiritual transformation. The passage is simultaneously a time of trial, a confrontation with one's own memory. Here is the vessel with earth from the temple inside it being passed from hand to hand its sanctity, its metaphysical attribute depends solely on whether the memory of Heaven will be passed on from one to the other together with the soil. Here, sanctity is memory of that which I remember as sacred: the Great Synagogue and St. Michael's Parish Church exist in this memory. The work of remembering requires trust, the conviction that "real history" is taking place right now and hence it is necessary to listen intently to its voices, whispers, stories.

In the pitch darkness on both sides of Grodzka Gate, those who have survived, protected (once again) by the darkness, tell their stories – they come to life like the street, which is no more, with all the neighbors and, ultimately, with the crash of gun butts and children crying. Answering the first of the survivors is the voice of one of the rescuers. Participants standing in the two symbolic chains light handheld lamps. I cannot recall the sequence and the content of the narrative, but I do remember the encounter, the sudden glare of light, and the restraint, as if in a place of prayer. The two groups with their earth from the shrines proceed toward the Gate. From the Lower Town comes Rabbi Michael Schudrich, leading the survivors and the families of survivors from the Lublin Holocaust; moving from St. Michael's Square is Archbishop Józef Życiński, crowding around him the Righteous Among the Nations, people from all over the Lublin region.

The passage of both groups is accompanied all the time by a narrative, or to be more precise, three alternating stories. The people saved from the Holocaust, who have come from various parts of the world, tell their story. What is their story about? Conscientiously, as seriously when turning the pages of an old photo album, they recall what was Before and After. The Shoah is silence. Being saved is a fact. Memory of the experience is brought back. The rescuers remember images: doors, clothes, the color of the hair, travel. The Shoah is present.

The survivors and the rescuers jointly form the national collective memory or else they build their own history. In both cases, it is an escape from a world with the Holocaust.

It is difficult to be sure beyond a doubt when the narrative structure is determined by a surfeit of memory and when by its inadequacy. Does non-expression result from the incapability of bridling a memory with

syntax and the rules of sense, or from an arbitrary arrangement of my history according to a different Beginning and a different End? Is the horrifying backdrop of the Holocaust in the rescuer's story the outcome of too many themes and events still retaining their significance for the present? Perhaps the most important thing in both stories is oblivion?

Considering the way collective memory is constructed from individual narratives, the categories of "surfeit" and "inadequate" memory could be explained as pathologies in its formation. Traumatic memories are either strengthened or weakened when included in our "own histories". In either case, the resultant image of the past is falsified. But is "objective" telling of history possible, meaning a story that is the closest to what actually happened?

In his essay devoted to the subject of identity in the community dimension, Ricoeur asks whether history, as a critical instance, enters into issues of differentiating between surfeit memory and inadequate memory.¹⁰

There is yet a third story in the discussed artistic project. It is the voice of the narrator, which may be interpreted as a means for confronting the two existing narrations about the Shoah, the two authentic "tales", with the artistic visualization of "their history". Is this the voice of collective memory, an attempt at a historical narration?

The belonging of specific memories to a single consciousness determines personal identity. Is the same true of collective consciousness? This is a serious issue for the survivors, as well as the rescuers refer to collective memory in glorifying their shared recollections. How do they come into being and is it at all possible to pass from the integrality of one's memory archives to some kind of collective subject? Does this occur in keeping with the principle of calling into existence an "individuality of the higher order", as Edmund Husserl would have it, or is collective memory merely a regulating concept, so Max Weber?

The narrative structure of memory partly resolves the problem of a continuity of individual memory and a discontinuity of the recollections told and updated on the occasion of such public community rituals, festivals and celebrations. An author's narrative strips a told history of the attribute of belonging to a given person, it makes memory no longer "mine" alone. Its goal is to be critical, hence it frequently reaches for history that has been written down. Incorporating a historical tale in

¹⁰ Ricoeur, *op. cit.*, p. 40.

artistic structure gives the experience of time, stripping it simultaneously of any cause-and-effect necessity. Thus art allows for different historical narratives. It may initiate Freud's "work of remembrance", but it cannot replace it. It is memory, not history that determines a sense of identity.

The authors of the discussed artistic event are aware of the difficulties that imbuing the past with a different meaning can create. Therefore, the narrator's voice is not omniscient. It is rather the voice of a guide bringing about the meeting of the survivors with the rescuers.

The gate as a place for the meeting is a legible sign of the impossibility of two worlds separated by history ever interpenetrating. Yet the intention of the organizers of this specific mystery ritual is to turn the Grodzka Gate from a syndrome of closing to an equally expressive symbol of opening. This particular shift of fixed meaning is possible not only because of the location of the action, but also because of the exceptional identity of the heroes of this meeting, the Polish and Jewish children, and the Polish-Jewish identity of the priest, Father Romuald Jakub Weksler-Waszkinel. Mixing the earth together and planting a grapevine by the children restores the old meaning of the gate, but it simultaneously creates new meanings that are open to people today.

Two living shrines in one land will grow and bear fruit once again.

The grapevine was a symbol of fullness and life, and of resurrection, already in ancient Greek culture. In Jewish and Christian thought, it has many symbolic meanings. It is sacred, believed to signify the people of Israel, cared for by God as the grapevine is cared for by man. The grapevine was also thought of as the tree of the Messiah and even as the Messiah himself, who was compared to the vine. Christ also compared himself to the grapevine bearing believers just as the shrub bore branches. Only one who has in him the full life of a grapevine can bear real fruit.¹¹ Bunches of grapes were borne by envoys from the Promised Land.

In the Lublin artistic undertaking, the **promised** land is a **remembered** land **chosen** anew. The choice has been made by children. The choice is of the past – its interpretation, and of the future.

Contemporary space as an area of mediation is symbolized by the act of planting a grapevine by Polish and Jewish teenagers and by a Polish-

¹¹ Cf. *Leksykon symboli*, comp. M. Österrreicher-Mollwo, Warszawa 1992 (trans. into Polish by J. Prokopiuk), pp. 75–76.

Jewish child, Father Waszkinel. The physical space, awareness of the place is also not without importance: the Gate is the space of passage. Artistic time has initiated here work on historical time, pointing to memory's constructive role, reminding of its narrative structure.

The last of the artistic projects to be discussed here was particularly eloquent for it was executed in the Martyrdom Museum at Majdanek.

DAY OF FIVE PRAYERS AT MAJDANEK

Description

Taking part in the *Day of Five Prayers* on 7 November 2000 was a group of former prisoners of the death camp at Majdanek, priests of five religions and creeds (Catholic, Moslem, Russian Orthodox, Protestant, Jewish), young people from Ukraine and from the Lublin schools, people of Lublin and invited guests.

Before entering the Camp at Majdanek, standing in front of the Monument, participants of the march impressed their fingerprints on unfired clay tablets. The clay from which the tablets were made had been mixed with soil from Majdanek. The tablets were then fired and became part of the artistic installation.

Prayers were recited in five selected spots during the march through the camp. In these five Places the priests, having finished praying, impressed their fingerprints on a single tablet. (...) Next to the place of the last Prayer, near the Crematorium, fired clay tablets lay on the ground; they bore impressions of randomly selected prisoner numbers; (...) former prisoners held tablets with their number; they introduced themselves and then laid the tablets next to the ones lying already on the ground. Those participating in the ceremony picked up all the tablets from the ground.

In a symbolic way they took with them the Memory of this place, of Majdanek. Each of the persons who took a tablet with a number will have the opportunity of learning about the person bearing this number from the Camp records preserved in the Majdanek archives. It will be a symbolic act of restoring to the prisoners the names they had been deprived of. Restoring to them the identity they were stripped of when entering the camp. It was also here that the priests recorded sections of the prayers they had recited. These texts were transferred to the clay tablets. After being fired, the tablets will be added to the tablets with the fingerprints of the participants in the ceremony and of the priests. Thus will the artistic installation commemorating the "Day of Five Prayers" at Majdanek

What manner of restoring memory about the Shoah can be chosen on a site of the Holocaust? The irreversibility of the act of annihilation assumes the destruction of the biological basis of life and all other attributes of this fact are of a secondary nature. Restoring memory of the body as a principal factor of the individual "I" appears to be unfeasible. After all, the bodily existence of man, whatever we may say about its fragility and transitoriness, its insignificance in the transcendental perspective, is primary with respect to the other attributes of existence. In it is the force of transcending oneself, but also a guarantee of integrality and separateness. The body separates me not only from other things, but also from "any potential We".¹²

With a sinister logic annihilation first strips the individual of a name replacing it with a number, then it totally destroys the sense of identity with the body, the feelings and experiences of which one has no way of escaping; finally, it destroys the body as a physical object. Does there exist a memory of the body as a source of psychophysical unity?

It would have to be an extra-conceptual memory, visual, tangible. The body is after all, constituted in the sense of sources, the seat of sensations, but this sensitivity is a continual mystery. "The fact that the body marks my place here and now, that it is the basis of identifying me by others, that ... it is my own experience irreducible to any descriptions of it from outside ..." ¹³ prompts the authors of the artistic undertaking to refer to the most elementary of the senses – the touch.

Clay as a sign of corporeality is as clear as can be; its identity comes from the fingerprints impressed in it. The transformation of the mythical clay "corpus" into a living body, Leib in Husserl's terms, demands the touch of a spirit. Contrary to the individual body, the spirit is general, it has no beginning and no end, it is neither created nor does it die. That is why prayer constitutes the touch of the spirit regardless of rite, language and the person of the priest.

The *Day of Five Prayers* accentuates this fact by imbuing the act of animating Memory with symbolic meaning. Having finished reciting their prayers, the priests leave a trace of themselves impressed on a single clay tablet. It is an act of reconciliation by the living as much as touching the mystery of our individual identity in its corporeal and spiritual perspective.

¹² Skarga, op. cit., p. 211.

¹³ Ibid., p. 217.

A connection is made when ex-prisoners of the death camp, survivors from the Holocaust, place their tablets next to the tablets of those who were annihilated. For the survivor memory becomes a condition of integration, binding successive moments in life, also life during the Holocaust. Others live on in this memory.

This simple statement is not without its problematic points, already discussed in this paper. In the concept of time, in which the "I" is not treated as a substantial being, but as one interwoven with time, the past keeps on being given a different meaning.

If this is so, then who are the prisoners whose tablets lie next to those of the survivors? Who are the individuals dependent on the deceptive memory of the survivors? The producers of the staging at Majdanek consistently return in their art to the idea of the Present. Participants of the ceremony pick up all the tablets with numbers lying on the ground, the tablets of the survivors and the tablets of the annihilated. What is most important for memory always takes place "at the blade-edge of the present".¹⁴

I have presented selected artistic realizations prepared by the Grodzka Gate – NN Theater Center, realizations that are in my opinion the most representative for their approach to reconstructing memory of the Shoah. In treating artistic expressions as a point of departure for philosophical reflection, we are always subject to errors of the "translating strategy", but without it one can hardly imagine the labor of a humanist. The philosophical tale about art has heuristic value. It initiates a debate, as in this case, about the functioning of memory of the Shoah and it reveals the multitude of possible interpretations.

On the level of critical-artistic analysis, memory of the Shoah may be read in the context of such an understanding of the past as was once called by S. Morawski a "festive-shrine" tradition, meaning one that "petrifies ancientness, returns blindly to the Book, respects unconditionally the castle, church and many other analogous symbols, wishes to disturb nothing laboring under the conviction that a taboo is contained there, a taboo which is in essence something eternal, immaculate".¹⁵

Such an interpretation may be based on the painfully obvious symbolism of the gate, passage, light and darkness, grapevine, clay and earth.

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 219.

¹⁵ S. Morawski, "Parę refleksji o tradycji i mitologii", in: *Pamięć – Miejsce – Obecność*, op. cit., p. 27.

The “Theater of Memory” delivers a “surfeit of history” in the form of images and voices from a past world, so readily evoked by Theater NN.

While this would be a legitimate trope, the Grodzka Gate Center does not use pastiche and its reconstructions have nothing of the nostalgia that is so typical of our present-day attitude to the past. Even if we surrender to such an illusion due to the accumulation of images and photographs, the Shoah presence will not permit us to lose our critical understanding of the past.

And what is it today? The phenomenon of the time of the Holocaust is that Annihilation has no past. It cannot be “naturally” added to a time that has gone, according to the same principle that does not permit language to speak without horror of the Shoah in the future tense. Putting it within a timeframe would mean including it in the discourse, giving it a name is nothing but controlling the phenomenon. The *Day of Five Prayers* at Majdanek invokes a form of time not conceived even in a philosophical perspective – a time of Annihilation. Even if the “festive-shrine” tradition has been used to touch this particular time, it was not done in “blind mode”, but with a distance that is proper to a critical reflection on history.

The theoretical-artistic practice of the Grodzka Gate Center is written into this trend of reconstructing the past, which makes the present responsible for the shape in which the past is made to be present. It does it in a different way than the post-modernist approach, confirming by the same the inexhaustible diversity of our epoch.