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BETWEEN REAL AND SYMBOLIC SPACE. DEATH REPRESENTATION IN WIKTOR TOŁKIN'S MARTYROLOGY MONUMENTS

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Interdisciplinary studies focused on the Holocaust, martyrology museums, and memorial sites, attract researchers of various disciplines, which inevitably translates into the selection of addressed topics. The analyses are conducted by both academics and practitioners (museum employees), mutually benefitting from the experience exchange. Additionally, important and equally well-heard voices are those of the Survivors. It is the representation of death in the monuments by Wiktor Tołkin found at the museums at the former concentration camps: Stutthof and Majdanek¹ that is discussed from a perspective of an art historian, confronted with the theoretical framework related to the aesthetics of death representations in martyrology museums. When demonstrating the connection between the theory of death representation aesthetics in historical displays and the monuments at Stutthof and Majdanek, I will resort to the research of Anna Ziębińska-Witek² analysing Holocaust-dedicated museum displays. This topic as well as that of the Holocaust victims is extremely broad, additionally evolving all the time thanks to e.g., new generations appearing among the public.³

The paper's title hints at Pierre Nora's concept of *les lieux de mémoire* engendering fruitful analyses already well rooted in science.⁴ Without going deeper into the complexity of the issue, for the sake of the present paper I would like to outline the question of symbolic and real space within which

I am intending to move. In the case of former concentration camps the symbolic sphere is expressed in treating those sites as 'great cemeteries'. A monument then often fulfils the role of a symbolic tombstone, venue for meetings or ceremonies.⁵ Nora's key assumption that 'sites of memory' are depositories of the past⁶ tightens the bond between the symbolic sphere and real space (sites' materiality). What has affected the concept of real space in the present paper was Andrzej Szpociński's statement: *In our daily existence spaciality (spatial dimension of reality) is experienced without any greater turbulences, temporality, however, is not.*⁷ Real space is a real place: sites of the former concentration camps (historical artefacts together with monuments) and museums operating there.

The author of two architectural-sculptural projects of interest to me is Wiktor Tołkin (1922–2013).⁸ His art was affected by the traumatic experience of WW II. As member of the Grey Ranks he was arrested by the Gestapo in Warsaw in 1942, then tortured, and taken to the KL Auschwitz-Birkenau, where he was assigned the camp number 75886. Thanks to his family's intervention his trial was held in Berlin; it proved no evidence to Tołkin's clandestine activity (during the tortures, Tołkin did not admit to being member of the Grey Ranks, while the Gestapo found no connection he might have with the resistance), so as one of the very few

he was released in 1944; several months later, as a soldier of the Home Army (AK) he was fighting in the Warsaw Uprising in the 3rd Company commanded by Lt Jan Piotrowski 'Lewar'. After the defeat of the Uprising, he was taken prisoner to the Sandbostel Stalag. Liberated by the Allies, he went to Belgium, where he started studying. A year later, he decided to return to Poland, to Gdansk, where his parents had moved from ruined Warsaw. Having graduated in architecture from the Gdansk Technological University, he, however, affiliated his artistic life with sculpture, although having no formal degree from the Higher School of Fine Arts in Gdansk.

When approaching the description and interpretation of two monument projects on the sites of the former concentration camps at Stutthof and Majdanek and before their final evaluation, it is important to emphasise that their concepts were worked out more than fifty years ago under entirely different cultural, social, and political circumstances. The evolution of a martyrology monument leading to an anti-monument⁹ (and I am convinced that in the future this stage, too, will be surpassed) testifies to a deep transformation of forms and ideas, and it would be erroneous to apply the same measure to concepts distanced in time. The catalyst motivating the transformation of the formula of a martyrology monument is found in the conviction that traditional monuments, by objectifying a myth and applying naïve forms of illustrating history, blur this history's deep understanding. The process may lead to no-memory, indifference, or denial. Hence the need for an alternative solution that could be seen in an anti-monument (counter-monument).¹⁰ One of the examples being the 1986 Hamburg installation by Jochen Gerz and Esther Shalev-Gerz titled *Against Fascism* in which the emphasis is put not so much on the affirmation of history, but on the work to remember it by activating the beholder/passers by. In order to accomplish this a square aluminium prism, 1 by 1 metres and 12-metre high, was covered with black lead; using a metal pen, passers by wrote on it inscriptions like in a condolence book. With the elapse of time, the monument was gradually lowered into the ground,¹¹ and currently a void is there: the symbol of the absence of the murdered Jewish community. However, the purpose of this paper is not merely the issue of the formal evolution of monuments, but death representations in display formulas of the Holocaust-dedicated museums confronted with the expression of definite elements of the architectural and sculptural designs of W. Tolkin found on the sites of the Stutthof and Majdanek concentration camps.

Tolkin treated the Stutthof camp site as *terra sacra*.¹² In the 'old' part of the camp¹³ he filled the places after the demolished barracks marked out by their concrete outline with black gravel. In the 'new' part the layout of the demolished buildings was marked with stone plinths with concrete blocks featuring the number of the barrack that had been placed there.

The monument ensemble located between the old and the new camp, and in the vicinity of the gas chamber and crematorium, is composed of two elements confronting each other due to the opposite directions: the vertical obelisk and the horizontal Mausoleum.¹⁴

The 11-metre-high obelisk called the Forum of the Nations commemorates the place where the ashes of the corpses burnt in the crematoria were disposed of. Its porous



1. Stutthof, *The Monument to Struggle and Martyrdom*, fragment: view of the 'new' part of the camp

walls feature petrified anthropomorphic contours: victims' traces, shadows. The expressive coarse texture anxiously reacts in sunlight. At the foot of the obelisk the date commemorating the Camp's liberation: '9 May 1945' was carved out. The Mausoleum in a shape of a prism is 48 metres long, and inside it victims' ashes have been deposited. Just like in a peculiar reliquary, the human remains can be viewed through a glazed opening in the Mausoleum wall from the side of the crematorium.

The opposite side (from the obelisk and the square) was covered with a bas-relief decoration and inscriptions. Just behind the inscriptions human silhouettes are distinguishable forming a funeral procession, as if heading towards the obelisk: the place where the ashes were spilt. In the scene of the procession of people-shadows, Tolkin's personal experiences echo; he had witnessed the Nazi crimes on the prisoners of the Camp when the rare survivors of the 'death march'¹⁵ from Stutthof¹⁶ reached Sandbostel: the recollection of that day was commemorated in the Stutthof monument. This procession of anthropomorphic figures is interrupted by brief inscriptions: 'HERE HUMANS WERE BURNT THIS FATE IN MADNESS AND HATRED WAS INFLICTED ON NATIONS BY NAZISM / 2 SEPTEMBER 1939–9 MAY 1945'; 'IF PEOPLE BECOME SPEECHLESS BOULDERS WILL SHOUT'; 'OUR FATE IS TO BE A WARNING FOR YOU, NOT A LEGEND'; 'LET THE VOICE FROM OUR GENERATION BE HEARD BY A GENERATION'. Such a worded text dramatically and unequivocally identifies the purpose of the monument as a durable testimony. In these words the artist also expressed the ideological purpose of the work: tribute to the victims of Nazism and a simultaneous call to the future generations for them not to blur the memory of those horrendous days. The shorter square side of the Mausoleum was covered with camp entry numbers of the prisoners who survived the Camp. The juxtaposition of the two Mausoleum walls illustrates the symbolic visualization of the ratio between the number of the killed and the survivors: merely 140 individuals lived to the Camp's liberation, while the total number of the victims is assessed at 63.000, of whom 23.000 perished during the Camp's evacuation from January to April 1945.¹⁷

The second of the projects was the result of the national competition for the design of a monument at Majdanek.



2. Stutthof, *The Monument to Struggle and Martyrdom*, general view



3. Stutthof, *The Monument to Struggle and Martyrdom*: Forum of Nations

Although the jury awarded the design by the Tołkin–Dembek team only the third place, it was their concept that was selected for implementation. Tołkin worked out the concept of a spatial monument, located along the north-south axis. The author's intention was to inspire in visitors emotions similar to those that the Nazi victims must have felt: (today such a procedure is criticized, as counter-monuments are favoured instead) with almost theatrical effects he constructed the growing tension. Those visiting the place become participants of psychological retrospections which are meant to reveal to them at least a substitute of the victims' experience: to approximate the *unimaginable*.¹⁸ It is the retrospection that is the key to reading Tołkin's martyrology monuments; the artist, himself a Survivor, decided that such a formula would guarantee the memory of the violence suffered here by the future generations. Therefore, the monument ensemble at Majdanek opens with an inclined plane symbolizing a ramp onto which people were herded out of the carriages. It leads into a concrete gorge with boulders bristling with sharp edges simulating hostile space. The public can leave the gorge up the stairs, steep and challenging to mount. This effort put into the climb towards the Gate is a symbolic forecast of the suffering awaiting in the Camp.

The symbolic Camp Gate is a huge mass of concrete pressed to form a jagged prism and supported on two pillars. The artist suggested that the gate owed its form to a gruesome vision of a 'cloud of pressed people'. This traumatic motif is present in the recollections of the witnesses; e.g., Zofia Posmysz, a former prisoner, describes her experience as follows: *I could see again the 'crematorium chimney vomiting flames', heaps of naked corpses at the blocks, I could hear the Apocalyptic tumult of the ramp, I could feel the omnipresent suffocating stink of burnt human flesh*.¹⁹ Tołkin, too, when recalling those days, recounted in one of the interviews: *Many a times did I have a brush with death. What I retain in memory most vividly are the atrocious sights from Auschwitz-Birkenau. The gate between Block 10 and 11 opened, and a huge carriage driven by humans, full of corpses, appeared: arms and legs hanging down. I also saw a heap of corpses by the furnace in the camp hospital. Through a camp window I could see a pile of women who had just been shot*.²⁰

In the gap under the Gate's bulk the further stage of the visitors' pilgrimage, namely the Way of Tribute and Memory, can be seen. Almost a kilometre long, it leads along the preserved watchtowers up to the Mausoleum. The distance the artist created between visitors and the Gate allows reflection and contemplation. Each step brings them closer to the climax of the whole project, namely to the Mausoleum: inspired by the motifs of a cup, a dome, a burial mound, or a vigil light of a giant reliquary, it holds 700 cubic metres of human ashes deposited inside. The relief inscription reading: 'OUR FATE A WARNING TO YOU' features above the entrance.

For visitors, the Gate and the Mausoleum are the beginning and end of the way, and for the victims it was the beginning and the finish of the camp life. Applying an appropriate gradation of artistic means, Tołkin constructs experiences with a mastery of a director of a performance, additionally resorting to psychological stimuli. The artist made it possible for a sensitive beholder to experience a traumatic voyage into the past. The searches were strongly inspired by the artist's personal experience: *I know Auschwitz not from a tourist visit, but as a prisoner there*.²¹

Tołkin is most famed for these two projects classified as spatial monuments, popular in the 1960s, and being an expression of searches for a new form of commemorative designs versus that popular in the 19th century.²² Such an approach to monument sculpture as an *architecturally organized space*,²³ initiated in the late 1950s, ennobles space which becomes a platform for organizing sculptural elements. This resulted in a strong bond among sculpture, architecture, and landscape, but also in a linear time-and-space narration (entry – road – exit).

A more avant-garde form was the alternative idea of a monument as Open Form submitted by Oskar Hansen and his team²⁴ for the competition for a monument at KL Auschwitz in 1958. The solution proposed in that project was to turn the whole Camp into a monument, replacing the latter, by not using a traditionally understood sculptural object, with a conceptual solution of a monument: a road crossing the whole Camp site; a diagonally traversing the Camp avenue was to be exposed. The remaining part was to be subdued to the elapse of time and its destructive force.²⁵



4. Stutthof, *The Monument to Struggle and Martyrdom*, mausoleum, fragment: view from the side of the gas chamber

Tołkin opposed the idea. In an interview he mentioned that in late 1943 and winter 1944 he was wondering what would become of this atrocious place after the war. Already at that point he thought that *a forest was a good place for a nice walk and would not tell anybody anything. Instead there should be something durable here.*²⁶

On the other hand, the political developments of the period had a strong impact not only on the discussed projects, but also a whole 'monument movement' of the time.

In search of a universal sign to commemorate the memory of the victims Tołkin consciously constructed universal human symbolism, namely non-denominational. Regrettably, this formula was appropriated by the Polish regime apparatus who were at the point in the course of an anti-Semitic 'purge' climaxing with a wave of expatriation of citizens of Jewish descent from Poland. Never directly politically committed (Tołkin refrained from joining the Polish Communist Party, PZPR), he was desperate to find a solution by resorting to such symbols as: a dome, a burial mound, a vigil candle, a sacrificial bowl. His concept was dominated by the *terra sacra* idea: this was the vision closest to his heart. He found justification for it in his own memory of the tragic past at KL Auschwitz, in the testimonies of other Survivors, as well as in documents (recollections and photographs of the corpses, burnt human remains, crematorium smoke).

Much time has passed since Wiktor Tołkin's monuments were created over which, under the influence of the evolving interdisciplinary theoretical reflection on the Holocaust, priorities as well as commemoration formulas have been re-defined. In her research, Anna Ziębińska-Witek refers to four basic ways of representing death in Holocaust museums: real, imagined, symbolic, and virtual. The first is activities exposing the power of a real thing and a real place. She observes that *the sites of former camps are attributed a special power exceeding historical testimony and documents in the traditional meaning, since they are martyrology sites: symbolic holy land and real cemeteries.*²⁷ Despite the difference in the medium: a museum display versus sculpture,



5. Lublin, *The Monument to Struggle and Martyrdom* at Majdanek: the ravine and the Gate



6. Lublin, *The Monument to Struggle and Martyrdom at Majdanek: Mausoleum*

a direct analogy can be found here. Tołkin grounded his concept on a dualistic structure: artistic archivization and retrospective reinterpretation, combining authentic historical remains with new objects of artistic intervention. Artistic archivization is a 'relative'²⁸ care of the historical tissue of the post-camp relics. He places his sculptural-architectural ensemble close to the preserved buildings. At Stutthof, as said above, he marked out the non-existing barracks with a concrete outline, whose inside he filled with black gravel, while in the entirely destroyed 'new' part of the Camp he placed stone blocks symbolizing barracks. At that point he went beyond the 'real' display entering the 'symbolic' one, *complying with the principle of the conventionality of the space marked by, but changed with the elapse of time.*²⁹ Such an unrestricted moving between these two formulas is a permanent feature of Tołkin's artistic activities. The creation of the reliquary and the exposition of the remains of the burnt corpses through a glazed opening from the crematorium side of the Stutthof monument, or in a form of a mount at the Lublin Mausoleum, is a controversial procedure. Formulating her critical view of similar solutions, Ziębińska-Witek refers to the view formulated by James E. Young who points to the fact that we get to know the victims through their absence, perishing, however we lose the possibility of getting to know their life. This gives rise to the danger of beholders assuming the point of view of the torturer.³⁰ Tołkin seems not to share such fears. His viewpoint had been shaped by the traumatic recollections of his stay at Auschwitz and his desire to serve the memory that tormented him. The Polish scholar also presents the stand of those museum curators who, despite

Young's objections, expose this evidence of crime performing *desired profanation*,³¹ arguing that removing them from visitors' sight might lead to denying the awesome past and to eliminating the memory of it in the awareness of future generations.³²

The second formula identified by Ziębińska-Witek is 'imagined death' in a narrative museum. Narration is a kind of visual historiography built of the following components: visual ones (e.g., photographs), artefacts, or textual elements (labels or comments). Importantly, when attempting to compare Tołkin's artistic processes with the display formula discussed here, this display format has a strong axial structure delineating the route for visitors.³³ The process of retrospective reinterpretation applied by Tołkin and affecting the beholder along the visiting route is, therefore, very close to the narrative museum mechanics. The elements of the Majdanek monument ensemble: the ramp, the gorge, the gate, the road along the watchtowers, the mausoleum, and the crematoria are comparable to a visiting route in a museum. Additionally, the author paid attention to tension gradation and time for reflecting on the place. Paraphrasing Ziębińska-Witek's observation with reference to display forms of death in Holocaust-dedicated museums it can be stated that the emotional power of the architectural-sculptural ensemble *is comparable to that inspired by a novel, play or a film (with a plot), which incite the process of projection-identification.*³⁴ The retrospective reinterpretation in the Majdanek monument is not, however, free from objections that are applicable to a narrative museum: it is not a simulacrum, since our 'visiting route' leads along barbed wire in the shadow of the genuine watchtowers.

As for 'symbolic death', Ziębińska-Witek observes that in *its case we have to do with an evident protest against the limitations of the language, revealing themselves particularly at the moment of an attempt at expressing human traumatic experience, and an attempt at finding alternative means of representing experience essentially unrepresented.*³⁵ This was exactly Tołkin's case: he searched for alternative means of representing the experience of staying at Auschwitz. He survived, and tried to work through his trauma; *art saved my life*, he once said.³⁶

The last formula Ziębińska-Witek discusses is 'virtual death'. Tołkin's martyrology monuments analysed in this paper were created in the late 1960s. It was hard to imagine then the artistic potential that was only to come with new media. It is thus impossible to trace any parallels between digitizing and Tołkin's oeuvre. However, on the margin of the pandemic situation in the world I would like to address the issue of virtual museum from an entirely different perspective than that applied by the scholar from Lublin in 2013. For some time online visiting was the only possible form. The Stutthof Museum³⁷ has it well prepared, and an online visit allows to face death representation in Tołkin's monuments.

To sum up the present reflections let me emphasise that despite the change in expectations from and formulas

with respect to monuments on former concentration camp sites,³⁸ in Tołkin's implemented projects from the 1960s it can be clearly seen that he tried to go beyond *the usually performed reminding* and faced the challenge of *searching expression for tragic memory.*³⁹ This can be clearly testified to by the analogies I have pointed to between Tołkin's artistic undertakings and the contemporary display strategies of presenting death in Holocaust museums discussed by Ziębińska-Witek: real death (treating sites of former death camps as cemeteries, process of artistic archivization), imagined death (visual historiography, axial narration structure), symbolic death (searching for form in art that will be working through the trauma). Concentrating on this analysis, I have merely signalled the ongoing critical discussion on such projects as forms of 'erasing' history; I have also omitted the topic of the new architectural formula of Holocaust-dedicated museums.⁴⁰ When juxtaposing the old and new monuments dedicated to the Holocaust, it can be easily observed how formulas and conventions have altered, analogically to the development in reflection on memory. The elapse of time causes that the contemporary beholder differently notices, perceives, and experiences historical facts. Simultaneously, along with the passing away of the generation who experienced the war, memory evolves into post-memory.⁴¹

Abstract: It is the representation of death in the monuments by Wiktor Tołkin found at the former concentration camps: Stutthof (at Sztutowo) and Majdanek (in Lublin) that is discussed. As an art historian, the Author confronts Tołkin's monuments with the theoretical framework

related to the aesthetics of death representations in martyrology museums. The monuments were created in the late 1960s. The Author has studied how the monuments coincide with the contemporary exhibition strategies used in Holocaust-dedicated museums.

Keywords: Wiktor Tołkin, Holocaust, museum strategies, martyrology monuments, Stutthof, Majdanek.

Endnotes

¹ I have contained a detailed description and interpretative analysis of the architectural and sculptural assumptions of the Stutthof and Majdanek projects in the book *Wiktor Tołkin – rzeźbiarz. Monografia twórczości* [Wiktor Tołkin: a Sculptor. Monograph on His Oeuvre], Neriton, Warszawa 2012 and in several papers.

² A. Ziębińska-Witek, *Estetyki reprezentacji śmierci w ekspozycjach historycznych* [Aesthetics of Death Representations in Historical Displays], in: *Obóz – Muzeum. Trauma we współczesnym wystawiennictwie* [Camp – Museum. Trauma in Contemporary Exhibitions], M. Fabiszak, M. Owsiański (ed.), Kraków 2013, pp. 31-48. The given paper presents in an abbreviated way the broader research of the author discussed in the book *Historia w muzeach. Studium ekspozycji Holokaustu* [History in Museums. Study of Holocaust Displays], Lublin 2011.

³ When assessing martyrology monuments one should not forget the question of changes in perception and in beholders' evaluation. A variety of approaches to the topic can be found e.g., in the following: J. Adamska, *Muzea – miejsca pamięci w oczach młodzieży. Omówienie rezultatów ankietyzacji przeprowadzonej w 1994 r. przez Radę Ochrony Pamięci Walk i Męczeństwa* [Museums: Sites of Memory in the Eyes of Teenagers. Discussion of the Survey Conducted in 1994 by the Council for the Protection of Struggle and Martyrdom Sites], 'Przeszłość i Pamięć' 1997, No. 1, pp. 8-12; T. Kranz, *Muzea martyrologiczne jako przestrzenie pamięci i edukacji* [Martyrology Museums as Spaces of Memory and Education], in: *Obóz – Muzeum...*, pp. 51-64; K. Stec, *Współczesny zwiedzający miejsca pamięci utworzone na terenach byłych nazistowskich obozów zagłady. Raport z Badań w Państwowym Muzeum na Majdanku w Lublinie* [A Contemporary Visitor to a Site of Memory Created on the Former Nazi Concentration Camp Sites. Report on the Research at the Majdanek State Museum in Lublin] [b.m.r.w.]; A. Krawiec, *Rola muzeów Holokaustu i ich audytoriów w kształtowaniu pamięci o Holokauście w kontekście nowych mediów* [Role of Holocaust Museums and Their Public in Shaping the Memory of the Holocaust in the Context of New Media], 'Media – Kultura – Komunikacja Społeczna' 2020, No. 2(16), pp. 21-42; S. Doległo, *Nie tak dawno, nie tak daleko. Strategie komunikacyjne miejsc pamięci Holokaustu* [Not So Long Ago, Not So Far Away. Communication Strategies of the Sites of Memory of the Holocaust], Instytut Dziennikarstwa, Mediów i Komunikacji Społecznej Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego, Kraków 2019.

⁴ *Les lieux de mémoire*, Vols. 1-3, P. Nora (ed.), Éditions Gallimard, Paris 1984-1992; see A. Szpociński, *Miejsca pamięci (lieux de mémoire)* [Sites of Memory (Lieux de Mémoire)], 'Teksty Drugie' 2008, No. 4, pp. 11-20. The issue of the multilayer quality of the memory issues is addressed in a number of publications. It is also represented in the monograph by a number of authors *Pamięć Shoah. Kulturowe reprezentacje i praktyki upamiętnienia* [Memory of the

- Shoah. Cultural Representations and Commemoration Practices], T. Majewski, A. Zeidler-Janiszewska (ed.), Oficyna, Łódź 2009; E. Jedlińska, *Kształty pamięci* [Shapes of Memory], Łódź 2019, pp. 283-293.
- ⁵ M. Owsiański, *(Z)rozumienie historii (Muzeum Stutthof w Sztutowie)* [Understanding History (Stutthof Museum at Sztutowo)], in: *Obóz – Muzeum...*, pp. 84.
- ⁶ *Les lieux de mémoire*, Vol. 1, P. Nora (ed.), Éditions Gallimard, Paris 1984, pp. XIX-XXI.
- ⁷ A. Szpociński, *Miejsca pamięci...*, pp. 17-18.
- ⁸ I have presented a detailed biography of the artist in the book *Wiktor Tołkin – rzeźbiarz...*
- ⁹ Examples of counter-monuments commemorating the Shoah victims: Horst Hoheisel, *Fountain in Kessel*, Kessel 1985 and *Grey Bus*, amidst the traffic sine 2006; Peter Eisenman, *Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe*, Berlin 2005; Joanna Rajkowska, *Greetings from Jerusalem Avenue*, Warsaw 2002; Jerzy Kalina, *Black Crystal*, Wrocław 2012; Wanda Swajda, *Mounds of Memory*, Gdańsk/Sztutowo 2007/2011. More on the topic, e.g., Ł. Postuszny, *Przestrzenne formy upamiętniania Zagłady* [Spatial Forms of Commemorating the Holocaust], Kraków 2014; J.E. Young, *Memory and Counter Memory*, 'Harvard Design Magazine', No. 9; A. Kamczycki, *Anty-pomnik* [Anti-Monument], in: A. Kamczycki, *Muzeum Libeskinda w Berlinie. Żydowski kontekst architektury* [Libeskind Museum in Berlin. Jewish Context of Architecture], Wyd. UAM, Poznań 2015, pp. 199-207; E. Rewers, *Pustka i forma* [Void and Form], in: *Pamięć Shoah...*, pp. 596-603; E. Domanowska, M. Smolińska, *Antypomniki i inne formy upamiętniania* [Anti-monuments and Other Commemoration Forms], in: *Rzeźba dzisiaj = Sculpture Today*, Vol. 4. *Anty-pomnik: nietradycyjne formy upamiętniania = Anti-Monument: Non-traditional Forms of Commemoration*, M. Smolińska, Eulalia Domanowska (ed.), Orońsko 2020, pp. 5-8.
- ¹⁰ J.E. Young, *Memory and Counter Memory...*
- ¹¹ <https://www.shalev-gerz.net/portfolio/monument-against-fascism/> [Accessed: 13 April 2021].
- ¹² *Terra sacra* as holy land does not only signify a cemetery, but also Palestine: *Jewish people tried for the first handful of soil thrown on the coffin to come from Palestine, thanks to which it could be imagined that the deceased was being buried in the Holy Land (...)* Due to ancestors' ashes deposited there, a cemetery was a holy site to Jews; http://www.auschwitz.org/gfx/auschwitz/userfiles/auschwitz/edukacja/zrozumiec_holokaust-ksiazka_pomocnicza.pdf
- ¹³ KL Stutthof was made up of two main parts: the old one, created from 2 Sept 1939 to May 1940, containing 10 barracks on the surface of ca 4 hectares; and the new one, north of the old camp, whose construction was launched in 1942.
- ¹⁴ On Tołkin's Stutthof memorial e.g.: I. Grzesiuk-Olszewska, *Polska rzeźba pomnikowa w latach 1945-1995* [Polish Monument Sculpture in 1945-1995], Warszawa 1995, pp. 118-119; A.K. Olszewski, *Pomniki walki i zwycięstwa w Polsce* [Monuments Commemorating Struggle and Victory in Poland], in: *Pamięć wojny w sztuce* [Memory of WW II in Art], J.M. Michałowski (ed.), Wrocław 1978, p. 16; M. Howorus-Czajka, *Wiktor Tołkin – ślady* [Wiktor Tołkin: Traces], in: *Wiktor Tołkin – ślady: Ocalaleś nie po to, aby żyć. Trzeba dać świadectwo* [Wiktor Tołkin: Traces. You Have Survived Not To Live. Testimony Is Needed], M. Howorus-Czajka (ed.), catalogue of the exhibition 7 May–30 Sept 2014, Muzeum Stutthof w Sztutowie, Wyd. UG, Gdańsk 2014; eadem, *Pomiędzy indywidualnym doświadczeniem traumy a pamięcią zbiorową – reinterpretacje przeszłości w pomnikach martyrologicznych Wiktora Tołkina* [Between an Individual Experience of the Trauma and Collective Memory: Reinterpretation of the Past in Wiktor Tołkin's Martyrology Monuments], in: *Poszukiwanie tożsamości kulturowej w Europie Środkowo-Wschodniej 1919-2014* [Searching for Cultural Identity in East-Central Europe 1919-2014] I. Kossowska (ed.), Wyd. Naukowe UMK, Toruń 2015, pp. 193-204; eadem, *The Dynamic Process of Remembering In Art – Perception of Victor Tolkin's Historical Monuments Before and After Transformation of State System in Poland*, in: *Current Issues in European Cultural Studies. Conference Proceedings*, M. Fredricksson (ed.), Linköping University Electronic Press, Linköping 2011, pp. 529-536; eadem, *Uwikłanie sztuki w historię oraz związane z tym problemy interpretacji, poznania oraz wartościowania na przykładzie twórczości Wiktora Tołkina* [Involvement of Art in History and Henceforth Derived Problems with Interpretation, Cognition, and Evaluation on the Example of Wiktor Tołkin's Oeuvre], 'Roczniki Humanistyczne' 2010, Vol. LVIII, Fasc. 4, pp. 249-263.
- ¹⁵ E.g.: J. Grabowska, *Marsz śmierci. Ewakuacja piesza więźniów KL Stutthof i jego podobozów 25 stycznia–3 maja 1945* [Death March. Evacuation of KL Stutthof and Its Subcamp Prisoners on Foot 25 January–3 May 1945], Muzeum Stutthof w Sztutowie, Gdańsk 1992; E. Grot, *Rejs śmierci. Ewakuacja morska więźniów KL Stutthof 1945* [Death Sea Voyage. Evacuation of KL Stutthof Prisoners by Sea 1945], Muzeum Stutthof w Sztutowie, Gdańsk 1993.
- ¹⁶ The dramatic description of the state of the Stutthof camp prisoners and their evacuation conditions was described many years later by Tołkin's friend from the Sandbostel Stalag Andrzej Ankiewicz: *They were of different nationalities, represented by a skeleton who yelled to be given something to eat, but in a way that he could survive.* http://ahm.1944.pl/Andrzej%20Wladyslaw_Ankiewicz/5/?q=Ankiewicz+Andrzej [Accessed: 6 March 2012].
- ¹⁷ The given figures: namely of the liberated prisoners, the total number of victims, and the evacuation victims differ depending on the source.
- ¹⁸ (...) *this is unimaginable, so I have to imagine it despite anything*, G. Didi-Huberman, *Kora*, T. Swoboda (Polish transl.), Wydawnictwo w Podwórk, Gdańsk 2011, p. 37.
- ¹⁹ Z. Posmysz, *Chrystus Oświęcimski* [Auschwitz Christ], MS, Wiktor Tołkin's property.
- ²⁰ K. Korczak, *Pomnik. 80. urodziny Wiktora Tołkina* [Monument. Wiktor Tołkin's 80th Birthday], 'Głos Wyrzeża' 2002, No. 63, p. 10.
- ²¹ S. Sierecki, *Wybieramy „Gdańszczanina 1968”. Pamięć o przeszłości zaklęta w głazy* [We Are Choosing 'Gdansk Resident' of 1968. Memory of the Past Enchanted in Boulders], 'Wieczór Wyrzeża' 8 July 1968, No. 159, p. 3; see also: K. Korczak, *Pomnik. 80...*; Author's interview with Wiktor Tołkin from 2008.
- ²² More on the topic e.g.: J. Olkiewicz, *Pomniki – przestrzeń architektonicznie zorganizowana* [Monuments: Space Organized Architecturally], 'Architektura' 1967, No. 10, pp. 398-400; A.K. Olszewski, *Pomniki walki...*, pp. 11-21; I. Grzesiuk-Olszewska, *Rzeźba polska lat sześćdziesiątych. Muzeum Rzeźby Współczesnej, październik 1993-styczeń 1994* [Polish Sculpture of the 1960s. Museum of Contemporary Sculpture, October 1993–January 1994], Orońsko 1993; *Idee sztuki lat 60. oraz inne sesje, seminaria i wystawy Centrum Rzeźby Polskiej* [Ideas of Art of the 1960s and Other Sessions, Seminars, and Exhibitions of the Centre of Polish Sculpture], J.S. Wojciechowski (ed.), Orońsko 1994; I. Grzesiuk-Olszewska, *Polska rzeźba pomnikowa...*; M. Lachowski, *Wobec pomników zagłady* [Facing Monuments of the Holocaust], 'Rzeźba Polska' 2008, Vol. 13, pp. 107-113; A. Gębczyńska-Janowicz, *Polskie założenia pomnikowe. Rola architektury w tworzeniu miejsc pamięci od połowy XX wieku* [Polish Memorial Ensembles. Role of Architecture in Creating Sites of Memory from the Mid-20th Century], Warszawa 2010; G. Rytel, *Czas zawarty w przestrzeni. Architektura współczesnych założeń upamiętniających* [Time Contained within Space. Contemporary Architecture of Memorial Projects], 'Politeja. Pismo Wydziału Studiów Międzynarodowych i Politycznych Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego' 2015, No. 3(35), pp. 133-141.
- ²³ J. Olkiewicz, *Pomniki – przestrzeń...*, *ibidem*.
- ²⁴ The following were the team members: Jerzy Jarnuszkiwicz, Julian Pałka, Lechosław Rosiński, Edmund Kupiecki, Tadeusz Plasota, Zofia Hansen.
- ²⁵ Much information on the victorious design and description of its concept can be found in literature on the subject, e.g.: M. Kitowska-Lysiak, *Ślady. Szkice o*

sztuce polskiej po 1945 roku [Traces. Sketches on Polish Art after 1945], Lublin 1999, pp. 59-70; P. Piotrowski, *Auschwitz versus Auschwitz*, in: P. Piotrowski, *Sztuka według polityki. Od Melancholii do Pasji* [Art According to Politics. From Melancholy to Passion], Universitas, Kraków 2007, pp. 125-132; P. Juszkiewicz, *Przestrzeń i pamięć. Projekt pomnika w Oświęcimiu* [Space and Memory. Design of the Auschwitz Monument], in: *Wobec Formy Otwartej Oskara Hansena. Idea – utopia – reinterpretacja* [Facing Hansen's Open Form. Idea – Utopia – Reinterpretation], M. Lachowski, M. Linkowska, Z. Sobczuk (ed.), TN KUL, Lublin 2009, pp. 173-188; J. Tarnowski, *Pomnik-Droga. Oskara Hansena z zespołem – projekt na Międzynarodowy Konkurs na Pomnik Ofiar Oświęcimia* [Monument – Road. Design for the International Competition for the Monument of the Auschwitz Victims submitted by Oskar Hansen and Team], in: *Pamięć Shoah...*, pp. 55-60; J.S. Wojciechowski, *Oskara Hansena (i zespołu) projekt oświęcimskiego pomnika „Drugi” w świetle jego teorii Formy Otwartej* [The Design of the Auschwitz Monument 'Road' by Oskar Hansen (and Team) in the Light of His Theory of Open Form], in: *Ibid.*, pp. 61-68; M. Lachowski, *Nowocześni po katastrofie. Sztuka w Polsce w latach 1945-1960* [Modern after Disaster. Art in Poland in 1945-1960], Wyd. KUL, Lublin 2013, pp. 268-273. J. Kozak, *Konkurs na międzynarodowy pomnik ofiar obozu w Birkenau* [Competition for the International Monument of the Victims of the Birkenau Camp], 'Miejsce' 2017, No. 3, <http://miejsce.asp.waw.pl/konkurs-na-miedzynarodowy-pomnik-ofiar-obozu-w-birkenau-2/> [Accessed: 13 April 2021].

²⁶ Interview of the Author with Wiktor Tolkin in 2008.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 32-33.

²⁸ By today's standards the awareness of conservation care left much to be desired, e.g., during the construction of the monument at Sztutowo the former Camp barrack was dismantled. In this case the artist's vision won against conservation principles.

²⁹ M. Owsiański, *(Z)rozumienie historii...*, p. 84.

³⁰ J.E. Young, *The Texture of Memory. Holocaust Memorial and Meaning*, New Haven-London 1993, pp. 132-133; A. Ziębińska-Witek, *Estetyki...*, pp. 34-35.

³¹ Phrasing after A. Wiczorkiewicz, *O funkcji i retoryce wypowiedzi muzealnej* [On Function and Rhetoric of Museum Expression], 'Konteksty. Polska Sztuka Ludowa' 1996, Nos. 1-2, p. 45.

³² A. Ziębińska-Witek, *Estetyki...*, p. 35.

³³ *Ibid.*, s. 36.

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 43.

³⁶ Author's interview with Wiktor Tolkin from 2008.

³⁷ <http://stutthof.org/projekty/MuzeumStutthof.html> [Accessed: 15 April 2021].

³⁸ New commemoration formulas on the example of monument projects on the sites of former concentration camps were presented by: G. Rytel, *Czas zawarty...*; E. Jedlińska, *Pomnik – Miejsce Pamięci...*; E. Błotnicka-Mazur, *Miejsce pamięci jako przestrzeń zaangażowania. Koncepcja ideowo-artystyczna Muzeum i Miejsca Pamięci w Sobiborze* [Memorial Site as Space of Engagement. Ideological and Artistic Concept of the Museum and Memorial in Sobibór], 'Muzealnictwo' 2021, No. 62, pp. 73-83, www.muzealnictworocznik.com.

³⁹ Phrasing after A. Kuczyńska, *Pamięć poprzez sztukę* [Memory through Art] [preface to a chapter], in: *Pamięć Shoah...*, p. 656.

⁴⁰ See e.g., D. Libeskind, *Between the Lines*, in: *Architecture in Transition: Between Deconstruction and New Modernism*, P. Noever (ed.), Prestel, Munich 1991, pp. 67-77; G.D. Rosenfeld, *Building After Auschwitz: Jewish Architecture and the Memory of the Holocaust*, Yale University Press, New Haven, London 2011; J. Lubiak, *O nowy kształt pamięci. Muzeum Żydowskie w Berlinie* [For a New Shape of Memory. Jewish Museum in Berlin], in: *Pamięć Shoah...*, pp. 619-624; C. Wąs, *Praktykowanie teorii. Koncepty wczesnych prac Daniela Libeskinda jako wzorce realnej architektury* [Theory Practising. Concepts of the Early Works of Daniel Libeskind as Models of Real Architecture], 'TECHNE/TEHXXN. Pismo Łódzkich Historyków Sztuki' 2014, No. 4, pp. 25-50; A. Kamczycki, *Muzeum Libeskinda w Berlinie. Żydowski kontekst architektury* [Libeskind Museum in Berlin. Jewish Context for Architecture], Wyd. UAM, Poznań 2015.

⁴¹ M. Hirsch, *Family Frames: Photography, Narrative and Postmemory*, Cambridge, Massachusetts-London 1997; M. Hirsch, *Żaloba i postpamięć* [Mourning and Postmemory], K. Bojarska (Polish transl.), in: *Teoria wiedzy o przeszłości na tle współczesnej humanistyki. Antologia* [Theory of Knowledge of the Past Seen against Today's Humanities]. Anthology, E. Domańska (ed.), Poznań 2010, p. 254; K. Chrudzimska-Uhera pointed to the issue writing as follows: *Today monuments need to serve the formation of so-called postmemory*; K. Chrudzimska-Uhera, *Kamienne piekło. Projekty Mirosława Nizio upamiętniające miejsca kaźni i zagłady: były niemiecki obóz koncentracyjny w Gross-Rosen oraz Mauzoleum Martyrologii Wsi Polskiej w Michniowie* [Stone Hell. Mirosław Nizio's Designs Commemorating Sites of Torture and Holocaust: Gross-Rosen Former Concentration Camp and the Mausoleum of Polish Rural Martyrology in Michniów], 'Rzeźba Polska' 2008, Vol. 13, p. 116.

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Table of contents 2021: <https://muzealnictworocznic.com/issue/13664>