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## IMAGES AT LARGE I.E. ON ART IN THREE-DIMENSIONAL SPACE, ON THE EXAMPLE OF LESZEK MĄDZIK'S ART.

The performance of *Mirror* by the Artistic Stage of KUL begins with the audience walking into a narrow space. It is all swathed or maybe rather wrapped in black drapes. No architectural structures typical for the theatre are visible. There is only one spotlight looming above the stage. Its light blinds the audience who, thanks to this operation, do not recognize where the sphere of proscenium begins. Once they have all taken their places, the aggressive source of light is turned off and darkness falls. Its intensity is so deep that the audience cannot see their neighbours. They become mentally isolated from the reality. Due to this, Leszek Mądzik, the director of the performance, performs the first important manipulation on the audience— he achieves his concentration on a series of images which will shortly be revealed to them during the spectacle.

This is how most spectacles by Leszek Mądzik's auteur theatre start. The Artistic Stage was originated in 1970, within the cultural structure of the Catholic University of Lublin. It functioned as part of the student theatre movement. It was a specifically understood alternative to the authorities during the time of communism. The performances realized by young students within universities were partially removed from the Polish People's Republic censorship which invigilated cultural events in Poland during the decades of the totalitarian system<sup>1</sup>. From the historical perspective, the legendary performances, created in that trend, used literary texts to build spectacles on their basis that were often rich in metaphors,

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<sup>1</sup> The student theatre movement initiated in the 1960s is a very important current for the development of independent culture during the times of the Polish People's Republic. The spectacles performed within this movement were not subjected to a strong censorship, which allowed the realization of the texts forbidden in the official circulation. In the middle of the 1970s some of the groups were nationalized: STU, Kalambur. In the 1980s many groups emigrated (The Theatre of the Eighth Day). The movement was reborn in the 1990s as a movement of alternative theatres, also known as off-theatre. See: Aldona Jawłowska, *Więcej niż teatr*, Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, Warsaw 1986; also: Magdalena Gołaczyńska, *Mozaika współczesności. Teatr alternatywny w Polsce po 1989*, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego, Wrocław 2002.

opposing the given reality. It is worth mentioning here, e.g. *In one breath*, based on Stanisław Barańczak's poetry (The Theatre of the Eighth Day) or *The wheel or the triptych*, based on the auteur script by Zdzisław Hejduk and Ryszard Bigosiński, which made use of the speeches by Józef Cyrankiewicz, the Prime Minister in the government of the Polish People's Republic as well as romantic poetry (The Theatre 77, 1971). Mądzik, however, suggested a different instrument for expression. Beginning with his third spectacle (*Supper*, 1972) performed in Lublin, he eliminated the word as the creative factor for the poetics of the performance. His spectacles became a series of images, enriched with music which does not perform merely an illustrative function. It is an active element that gives emotional expression to the image. Such poetics, which is difficult to describe, has always been elusive to the scholars. Mądzik's aesthetics has achieved success not only because he was appraised as an artist both in the country and abroad, but also in a historical dimension. The Artistic Stage has survived all political, economic and social crises that took place in Poland in the last 45 years of this country's history. It is the only theatre derived from the alternative current that has an uninterrupted continuity of work. Additionally, it owes its vitality to the lack of a permanent troupe. Mądzik is constantly recruiting actors from the students of KUL. The director has never created a fixed group which would function within the economic structure based on a state grant, as repertory theatres do. At all times his activity is carried out within the framework of the university.

Mądzik is a person who binds together the Artistic Stage. The artist, born in 1945 in Bartoszowiny, in the Świętokrzyskie Mountains, comes from Kielce. There, he graduated from the secondary school of art in 1965, with the specialization in artistic weaving. At the end of the 1960s he began studying the history of art at the Catholic University of Lublin. The university was famous for its forward way of thinking, with its professors who did not submit to the overwhelming political pressure. Mądzik began his fascination for the theatre with the play of *Wanda*, from Cyprian Kamil Norwid and directed by Irena Byrska (1967), which was performed by the then Academic Theatre of KUL that existed at the university. However, he quickly began to build his own group and his own poetics. The Artistic Stage of KUL, which he created in 1970s, has become an auteur theatre.

The notion of "auteur theatre" is characteristic for the history of the 20<sup>th</sup> century Polish theatre. Back then, a lot of directors-personalities appeared, whose vision of a performance comprised not only the literary sphere, but also scenography or acting, creating the Wagnerian *Gesamtkunstwerk*.<sup>2</sup> The aesthetics shaped by Mądzik was separate because it distinguished his work against a background of other per-

<sup>2</sup> In the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century you can mention several names connected to the notion of the auteur theatre or rather the auteur vision of a spectacle: Stanisław Wyspiański, Juliusz Osterwa, Leon Schiller. The theatre gained the largest number of individuals who created auteur spectacles after the Second World War, among others: Tadeusz Kantor, Jerzy Grotowski, Józef Szajna, Jerzy Grzegorzewski, Krystian Lupa.

formances that were important for the Polish theatre in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. From the very beginning, the director created picturesque images that were situated in a three-dimensional space. At the same time, the condensation of darkness and the scarce light, at times illuminating only one spot, made the audience imagine the spectacle more than they actually saw it. The visual art was the narrative sphere. Its composition was based on simple principles derived from the dynamics of ancient dramaturgy. Usually, there was a clearly defined beginning, developing sequences, and the closing, silencing final images. The whole spectacle was never long, lasting 45-50 minutes. As darkness has fallen and the music has faded out, the spotlight was lit again over the proscenium as a signal for the audience to leave the auditorium. The audience of the Artistic Stage usually came out moved, in silence. The director left the audience alone as neither he nor the actors came out for the applause which takes place in a traditionally understood theatre.

In 1988 a Polish critic and an observer of Mądzik's work demanded to further specify the notion of *artistic theatre*, which was then quite common among the scholars. "The artistic theatre – when no one asks, I know. When I am to explain it to the enquirer, I do not know. I borrow a sentence from a brilliant (and holy) thinker to become aware of my own hesitations and uncertainties. For what really is it, this *artistic theatre*?"<sup>3</sup> The critic pointed to, among other things, the aesthetic theories<sup>4</sup> that were well known to Polish scholars and which derived the etymology of artistic thinking of the creators from, among other things, the transformations within the theatre caused by the avant-gardes of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It was not only to introduce a play with an object and its meaning, the metaphors initiated by the Dadaists and Surrealists. It was also about a new way of seeing the space of the stage, its depth and colour, well visible in the works of Oskar Schlemmer and the student theatre he initiated in a German school of Bauhaus in the 1920s. Somewhat later, a French scholar, Didier Plassard<sup>5</sup>, developed similar theses, pointing out explicitly to a circle of artists descending from the avant-garde movement at the beginning of the last century as to those whose theories and actions formed the 20<sup>th</sup> century theatre.

Twenty years have passed since these conclusions were made. The world has changed and the human imagination was dominated first by computers and then by the Internet. The photographic image becomes improved again and again, and it can also be transformed at will. Technology has given artists a powerful creative tool for the construction of unusual images for the audience, which open up new realities. Despite the fact that the theatre has been enriched by the new media, the

<sup>3</sup> Paweł Konic, *Teatr artystyczny i jego przedmiot*, "Dialog" 1989, no. 10, p. 126

<sup>4</sup> See: Zbigniew Taranienko, *Teatr bez dramatu*, Centralny Ośrodek Metodyki Upowszechniania Kultury, Warsaw, 1979.

<sup>5</sup> Didier Plassard, *L'Acteur en effigie*. Figure de l'homme artificiel dans le théâtre des avant-gardes historique. Allemagne, France, Italie, Institute Internationale de la Marionette, L'Âge d'Homme Charleville-Mézières, Lausanne 1992.

Artistic Stage, traditional in the manner of the aesthetic construction of the image, constantly gains new fans. Therefore, I believe that in the new millennium, it is fully justified to repeat the question about Mądzik's roots. I think that he does not come from the tradition of grand avant-garde movements of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, although he, undoubtedly, makes use of them to some extent. He draws not so much from their artistic achievements, but rather from the mental ones. Hal Foster<sup>6</sup> once said that, although all *isms* developed before the Second World War, the audience grew up to the reception of the new art only in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Mądzik is a beneficiary of this social consent for a different, distinct, non-everyday art. Also the critics already know that the "theatre can be in just any corner"<sup>7</sup> and the artist marks, with his gesture, the beginning, the development, and the end of a theatrical spectacle, a creative ritual.

Mądzik, having closed the audience in a dark box as if in a black box, makes images, full of strange spaces, indistinguishable shapes, alive human figures and dead wooden mannequins, present in the dark space. The lack of text, of a literary plot or a conflict between the protagonists, has always been the biggest problem when it comes to interpretations. When, years ago, I studied<sup>8</sup> the reception of the Artistic Stage, the surprising fact was that every critic saw a different spectacle. Mądzik's art affects the recipients so specifically that every person filtrates the sequence of images through his own experience, and thus finds in it different contents that have a strong auto-emotional tone. The textual layer is and has been unnecessary for the artist – even when he turned to the narrative poem *Mother departs* by Tadeusz Różewicz, he made, on its basis, the spectacle *She departs* (2003), which is an iconographic commentary on the poet's text. In *Mirror*, Jerzy Radziwiłowicz, an actor from the National Theatre in Warsaw, reads fragments from Bruno Schulz's *Loneliness* in an off-stage voice-over. However, only two or three sentences are spoken to direct the audience towards a possible interpretation of the images. It can be definitely said that Mądzik uses words cautiously, mostly limiting their number only to the title-slogan which should give the audience a small hint. When we put them together, and there are already 21 of them, we can see that they form a semantic sequence<sup>9</sup>. It suggests that the author constantly dwells on subjects that pertain to love, death, departure, the transition between the sphere of

<sup>6</sup> See: Hal Foster, *Powrót realnego. Awangarda u schyłku XX wieku (The Return of the Real: The Avant-Garde at the End of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century)*, translated by Mateusz Borowski, Małgorzata Sugiera, Universitas, Cracow 2012.

<sup>7</sup> See: Joanna Ostrowska, „Teatr może być w byle kącie”, Wydawnictwo Naukowe UAM, Poznań 2014.

<sup>8</sup> See: Dominika Łarionow, *Przestrzenie obrazów Leszka Mądzika*, Towarzystwo Naukowe KUL, Lublin 2008.

<sup>9</sup> *Ecce Homo* – 1970; *Births* – 1971; *Supper* – 1972; *Fibres* – 1973; *Icarus* -1974; *Stigma* – 1975; *Herbarium* – 1976; *Moisture* – 1987; *Wandering* – 1980; *Edge* – 1983; *Binding* – 1986; *Getaway* – 1989; *Breath* – 1992; *Crack* – 1994; *Pall* – 1997; *Shroud* – 2000; *She departs* – 2003; *Furrow* 2006; *Transition* – 2010; *Mirror* – 2013; *Shadow* – 2013.

vitality and dying. It would be wrong to assume that Mądzik is trying to impose something on the audience. Towards his piece of art, he behaves like a painter who has hung his paintings in a gallery. Both them and the audience gain a space of freedom, beginning an independent life outside their creator's studio as the original receptive context. Mądzik steps aside into the shadow. Despite his presence in all the performances, the play starts its own independent life after the premiere. The author changes into a lighting director, who, having contact with a person sitting outside the stage area, administers the intensity of light in every spectacle from behind a pulpit full of buttons.

*Thinking in images*<sup>10</sup>, which Mądzik frequently accentuated in his speeches, is an immanent feature of sensitivity derived from the art of scenography as a separate artistic domain. Thus, scenography is an imaginary representation of signs in a three-dimensional space, constructing a metaphorical meaning for the art of the theatre. The composition of its elements is not based on the principles derived from the art of painting, like it was hitherto often believed. Its space is valorised through light and depth, and, additionally, it is differently perceived from different points available to the audience. Therefore, to obtain its desired meaning, the author must take into consideration a lot more factors than a painter. That is why its development is closely connected to the history of the theatre understood as the history of evolution of real and metaphorical forms in space. Modern scenography has gone beyond the sphere of a theatre building, diversely understood, because iconographic thinking about the media message is one of most important qualities, characteristic for the actions of artists working in different areas. It seems that Mądzik understood, even back in the 1970s, that iconicity is a goal which art will strive for.

The fact that scenography is connected to the creation of images with a strong impact on the audience was already known to Aristotle who, in his *Poetics*, warned against the creation of spectacles based on the actions of a *scenographer*. They were supposed to interfere with the contact with the poet's work. However, he admits that a good decorative design may, just like the text of the tragedy, induce the most sublime Greek feeling – *catharsis* – which is pity and fear. However, for him, to achieve this magical purification through contact with a painted picture is something not entirely flattering. And although today we know, that his believes contain mainly theoretical thoughts which were not necessary reflected in the then reality. One can see in them the thoughts of Stagirite who, despite visible aversion, sees scenography as a constructive material for affecting the recipient's imagina-

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<sup>10</sup> See: Leszek Mądzik, *Myszę obrazami*, "Teatr," 1983, no. 6, pp. 7-8; also: *Teatr bezsłownej prawdy. Scena Plastyczna Katolickiego Uniwersytetu Lubelskiego*, ed. Wojciech Chudy, Lublin 1990, pp. 101-103; Fragments from *Leszek Mądzik. Scena Plastyczna KUL*, ed. Piotr Zieliński [album], Lublin 1995 see also: *Leszek Mądzik I jego teatr*, Warsaw 1998; see also: theatrical programs to the performances by the Artistic Stage.

tion. Undoubtedly, Aristotle could not foresee that after only over 2000 years we will live in a world dominated by images.

Jon McKenzie<sup>11</sup>, known especially as the author of the theory of overwhelming performance, in one of his texts, writes about the iconicity of the modern, global world. When we think about certain events: political, economic or social, we refer in our unconsciousness to specific images taken from the media culture. It dominates our imagination. For a researcher, an example of this may be the airplanes crashing into the towers of the World Trade Center in New York on September 11<sup>th</sup> 2001, or the image of Santa Claus on Coca-Cola cans, or the first global concert of the multimedia group *The Beatles*, which took place on June 27<sup>th</sup> 1967, in London. It was transmitted by the radio and the television on that day. The band sang *All you need is love* to a million of viewers. Icons create slogans which we refer to like to the quotes from grand literary works. They are directly associated with a meaning, a metaphor, to which we want to refer. This quality of the modern world was used somewhat *crosswise* by Zbigniew Libera in his cycle *Positives* (2002/2003), where he used images strongly associated with the history of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. He performed a certain action on his protagonists, reversing the meaning from a negative connotation – like the picture of the extermination of prisoners at the Nazi camp in Auschwitz on a famous photo from 1945 – to a positive one – a picture similar in composition, showing anonymous neighbours by a wire fence. Culture seems to be playing more and more with the viewers unconsciousness.

Mądzik knew this when he created his sublime images that were connected to his artistic fascinations or, one might even say, were a certain way of peeking at the old masters. Nevertheless, we will never find any explicit, literal quotations from Hieronymus Bosch or Rembrandt van Rijn in the spectacles by the Artistic Stage. We can only see the effect of an artistic transformation that they underwent in the artist's imagination. Without a doubt, the audience felt fear watching a great cylinder, coming at them from an undetermined distance in the first sequences of the *Getaway* spectacle. Surprising was a dangling figure with long hair, illuminated by a spotlight, with an audible sound of dripping water, in the epilogue of *Moist*. It resembled sheets of fabric hanging on a clothesline. In *Crack*, irritating were human feet which contrasted with the dangling wooden leg parts of the mannequins. In *Wandering*, exhilarating were the fields of grain stretching out to the horizon. Mądzik refers to the associations descended from well-known icons of the European culture, like the wheel of fortune, which appears frequently (*Icarus*, *Moist*). It is a symbol of the human fate, its changeability, well known from the medieval iconography. Mądzik never defines it; he only shows it. He gives the

<sup>11</sup> See: Jon McKenzie, *Global Feeling (Almost) all you need is love*, in: Performance Design, edited by Dorita Hannah and Olav Harsløf, Museum Tusulanum Press, University of Copenhagen, Copenhagen 2008, pp. 127-141. See: Jon McKenzie, *Performuj... albo. Od dyscypliny do performansu (Perform or Else. From Discipline to Performance)*, trans. Tomasz Kubikowski, Universitas, Cracow 2011.

audience freedom to analyse the meaning. Sometimes the director incorporates an artistic allusion and becomes even deceitful towards its interpretation. An example of this may be the allusion to *Herbarium*, the last cycle of sculptures by Alina Szapocznikow, from 1972. It was highly characterized by death, by parting. The sculptress, suffering from cancer, recorded the body of Piotr Stanislawski, her son, in the casts made of synthetic resin. Her piece of art is a strong desire to preserve the moment of vitality, the beauty of a young man's body, to defy the act of passing and annihilation. The artist also constructed sculptures that were moulds of her own body parts, like breasts or belly, to preserve their shape against the degradation by cancer. At the end of her life, she created a cycle *Invasion of Tumours* (1970), in which she nearly personified the illness as an opponent to be tamed. However, when Mądzik was making his *Herbarium* in 1976, he skipped the aspect of death. He was himself young and vital then. His interest was in Szapocznikow as a person triumphant in life and love, the notion that critics also attribute to her art. However, this does not apply to *Herbarium*, but more to her earlier sculptures: *First love* (1945), *Difficult age* (1956), or the comically tinted games with the sexuality of culture: *Goldfinger* (1965), or *Leg* (1962-1965). *Herbarium* of the Artistic Stage is full of natural eroticism, a fairy like spectacle of colours, fierce music – it's a praise of life not death. The protagonist, a young nameless man, flounces between women of different colour. The epilogue shows pieces of some fabric falling from above with a sharp cutting sound. So far, it has been the only such colourful and vivid spectacle created by Mądzik.

Nowadays, scenography uses new media more and more often. Screens seem to be omnipresent. Repeatedly, their function is brought down to the prosaic inclination to direct the recipient's perception. An image displayed on the screen is supposed to bring the attention of the audience to an element chosen by the artist. Sometimes it is a scene outside the presented sphere of the performance, but often the screen intervenes directly into the acting. In the theatre, a camera crops the image for the audience to show the face or other body parts of the protagonist. An extreme example can be the spectacle *Factory 2*, by Krystian Lupa, shown in the National Old Theatre (2008). It told a story of Andy Warhol's so-called "factory". During a monologue by one of the protagonists, his genitals were live-filmed and projected onto a big screen hanging above the coach he was sitting on. Mądzik was never so oppressive towards his actors. He was, however, a pioneer when it comes to the ability to crop a space with the use of screens. The creator of the Artistic Stage achieved the effect of cropping the reality of the stage space through the darkness he implemented and thanks to the construction of cabinets that he lit with spotlights. The audience focused on the presented section of Mądzik's reality. More than once, the director added something to the game with the audience, making the image only slightly visible at first, to achieve full sharpness after a few minutes. His narration was sublime even when he used an actor's naked body placed in a cabinet/on a screen (*Crack*). It was lit by a beam of light, highlighting

only the back and male buttocks, as in baroque paintings in which corporality has perfect, full shapes.

The difference between the media stage designers and Mądzik is essential. The Artistic Stage of KUL has never used media techniques. Mądzik is a traditionalist; he can achieve all the effects with the use of brown paper, ropes, the light, black foil and a skilled actor. That is why he is real. It can certainly be said that his art foreshadowed the coming of a new era of a stage design narration. For a historian of stage design, it is obvious that the artist from Lublin efficiently used a thousand-year output of theatre achievements. Over the centuries, decorations dominated the whole space of the stage many times, filling it out with the painted backstage, backdrops and, then, screens. Basing on tradition, Mądzik has become a pioneer towards the modern technological avant-garde, which only now seems to be discovering all the meanings of a space multiplied by screens. A perfect example can be the use of projection by, among others, Heiner Goebbels in his spectacle *Erari-tjaritjaka*, based on the prose by Elias Canetti (2004). There, scenography became an image/a screen, although not of a traditional, rectangular shape, but rather of a prosaic contour of a house. The action was displayed on it as if it was a projection from inside of the flat, in which an actor/protagonist was moving in real time. The theatrical aspect of a spectacle was preserved, because it was a meeting between a man on the stage and the audience. The action took place within the depth of the stage space situated behind that house/screen. Mądzik also takes up the whole space of a stage with his images. He builds it over so hermetically that our eyes do not even notice the technical changes that take place during the performance. The iconographic message flows as a film projection. The suggestion is so strong that the audience sometimes succumb willingly to the illusion of an unreal reality. Often enough, the audience wants to enter the space of the stage after the spectacle to touch it, check if it is real.

Mądzik likes to confuse not only our eyes, but also our sense of dimensionality. In his story, he tried to move the audience, transport them into another sphere as it was done in the final sequences of the spectacle *Stigma*. There, the platform with the sited audience was shifted over a pit, in which the epilogue was played out. He also wanted to corner the audience with images as in the spectacle *Edge*, where a centrally placed audience was attacked with images from all sides. The director knew that the artistic nature of the theatre is a powerful tool which, when skilfully used, has a great impact on the person coming into contact with his art. Contemporary multimedia artists, who want to attract, corner and surprise their recipient, can nowadays learn from Mądzik.

The person seems to be the most interesting issue in Mądzik's art. The Artistic Stage does not have a named protagonist; he is the proverbial everyman. If it wasn't enough that he never got a biography, he never had a face either. Now, after 45 years of the theatre's existence, we can say that he is more a man than a woman. Mądzik, almost obsessively, avoided the identification of any actor, through his



external features, with the theatre. A famous example may be the actor who played in the premiere of *Breath*. He was the main protagonist, leading the whole set of images. The man's body was media-oriented, as he easily focused the audience on himself. It is a well-known feature of good actors, but it is not useful in the activity of the Artistic Stage. Mądzik is afraid that the audience's attention will be diverted from the whole composition of images to only one movable element, not intended as fundamental. Therefore, this actor was fast replaced with another. It is a characteristic feature of the theatre which can perform most of its spectacles for many years, with a constantly changing line-up. The actor's body is to be as anonymous as possible, only utilitarian. Despite this rather drastic, from the artistic point of view, way of treating actors, Mądzik never undermines their identity. He treats them with dignity as members of the troupe when they do in fact belong to it, as well as when their adventure ends. The director makes friends with them and they willingly come to Lublin for consecutive anniversaries of the theatre. Therefore, Mądzik's parasitizing on the live tissue is exceedingly elegant, even though the human element is often balanced by a wooden mannequin. The scene where the masks are taken off is reproduced repeatedly. Predominantly, the actor's head in a plaster mask is closed in a cabinet; anonymous hands, accompanied by music, take off the fabric, revealing a human face. The coexistence of two worlds, alive and dead, always constitutes the most distressing moment of all the exegeses relative to the spectacles of the Artistic Stage. I believe that in the face of electronic media, the character of Mądzik's work is once again a pioneering one, because it allows the introduction of an object/doll/puppet to the play, which is in the performance on equal terms with the actor, even when he is made to look like a puppet thanks to the costume. Modern artists more and more eagerly experiment with the virtual reality. Nowadays holograms are introduced to the stage. A Belgian artist, Kris Verdonck, from "A Two Dogs Company", approached that issue interestingly: in 2012 he realized a project entitled *M, a reflection*, in which he brought an actor and his hologram to the stage. The spectacle was a monodrama and the audience were to guess which of the figures was alive. The creators of the popular culture went even further: during the Billboard Music Awards in 2014, which took place in the MGM Arena building in Las Vegas, Michael Jackson entered the stage. The king of pop, who died in 2009, sang and danced. The hologram created figure was incredibly real; it was accompanied by nearly 60 real dancers who authenticated the show. In Poland, Boris Kudlička, a stage designer constantly working with Mariusz Treliński in the Grand Theatre – Polish National Opera, also took advantage of new technical possibilities and introduced holographic decorations in the spectacle *Iolanta/Bluebeard's Castle* (2013), which made a huge impression on the audience and critics. In my opinion, Mądzik has proved that theatre about people, for people, may do without people, without functioning in the convention adopted by the puppet theatre. The Artistic Theatre has made the first step; the next step are holograms.

The last issue, which has always troubled me, is the face. The protagonists of the Stage have no faces. Sometimes they have hair, long and beautiful, suffusing film frames, sometimes a beard. However, they are usually bold figures, mostly asexual. In a few moments, for the purpose of one or two sequences, female breasts appeared or a male buttock. Sometimes the scenes acquire a very erotic character. In the spectacle *The Mirror*, one of the sequences is acted out in a cabinet/screen. A naked man flounces about in an amorous ecstasy between a woman's legs. The audience is paralysed by the physical vivification of a mania, sexual fetishes known from Schulz's drawings, to whose art the performance refers. However, the characters created by the director from Lublin have no eye colour, no facial expression or any other individual features. Leszek Mądzik is the only face of the Artistic Stage. It can be said that he has become the main protagonist of his own art. He once took part as an actor in *The Furrow*, leading the main protagonist in a silent role. The uniqueness of this spectacle referred not only to the openness of the director, who bared himself before his audience, but also to the space, stripped of the darkness. However, Mądzik's art has never repeated this experience.

The everyman of Mądzik's world is only partially a sign of himself. The individuality, the different way of looking at the reality by the artist from Lublin as a photographer, testifies to that. He loves the texture, the colour, the diversity of the world, which he writes down in his photos as if in a notebook. They document his travels, a fascination with the world and its diversity. You can say that a vast majority of Mądzik's albums consist of the photos of faces of the people he has met, street artists, characters full of fantasy and colour. Hans Belting<sup>12</sup>, when outlining the history of faces, focused on the role a portrait played in the culture. He came to an interesting conclusion that the crisis in this artistic sphere is connected to the overwhelming number of figures on billboards, in TV channels, etc. The augmentation denied the sense of importance of a meeting between the person in the painting and the recipient in front of it. Mądzik has foreseen that the modern world has become dominated by selfies, sweet photos which are posted on Facebook or other social media every day. We can no longer see any features, the skin colour nor any other signs of individuality in these multiplied faces. A contemporary human being has become an anonymous everyman, like the protagonist of the Artistic Stage of KUL. They are both accompanied by a pictorial narration, which constitutes the iconological character of the modern world.

Mądzik's art is not limited only to the Artistic Stage, which is undoubtedly his primary field of work, but not the only one. From the beginning of his career he collaborated with national repertoire theatres, making stage designs for other directors' plays, among others: Anton Chekhov's *Ivanov*, directed by Ignacy Go-golewski (Juliusz Osterwa Theatre in Lublin, 1981), Stanisław Wyspiański's *The*

<sup>12</sup> H. Belting, *Faces. Historia twarzy*, trans. Tadeusz Zatorski, Słowo/Obraz/Terytoria, Gdańsk 2015.

*Legend*, directed by Andrzej Maj (The New Theatre in Łódź, 1984), Witold Gombrowicz's *Pornography*, also directed by Maj (The New Theatre in Łódź, 1985). The stage designs by Mądzik as an artistic worker always aroused the admiration of critics, who were never indifferent to them. However, Mądzik feels best when he is in control of the whole performance, hence a number of his later spectacles in puppet and dramatic theatres or even operas<sup>13</sup>. This last genre seemed to be the most appropriate for his work as the images of the Stage are inseparably connected to music. Mądzik hires the best Polish composers from the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, such as Zygmunt Konieczny, Stanisław Radwan, Jacek Ostaszewski, Przemysław Gintrowski, Jan A.P. Kaczmarek. They create the music without seeing the spectacle, working with an imaginary set of images suggested in the conversations by the director. Jan A.P. Kaczmarek, the Academy winner for the movie *Finding Neverland* (directed by Max Foster, 2004), talked about his experience when he took part in a Lublin conference dedicated to the combination of music and image in September, 2015. He stressed that music is subordinate to the image; its narration can neither dominate it nor limit it to an illustrative function.

At the beginning of 2015 Mądzik entered Stanisław Moniuszko Grand Theatre in Poznań to create *Cavalleria Rusticana* by Pietro Mascagni. The spectacle showed that the director used the space of the stage very meticulously. He created monumental moving blocks which reminded some of stone boards and others of the great texture of heavy fabric. It turned out that Mądzik's dominating personality cannot adjust to the needs of an opera theatre and its actor. The stage design in Poznań dominated over the musical message. The critics appreciated the decorative qualities of the play, but they believed that the artistically sublime spectacle bothers the singers<sup>14</sup>. Although Mądzik constantly experiments and searches for something, which, undoubtedly, indicates his artistic vitality, he feels best as the director of unconventional spectacles which often cannot be categorized by the critics. In 2014 he presented his spectacle *Pasage, de l'Ombre à la Lumière – Partie 2* at an abandoned Cistercian abbey in Pontigny, France. He vivified the space for the purpose of only one performance, which was a part of a festival dedicated to Andriej Tarkowski. The organizers of the festival wanted to show the spiritual aspect of art. Mądzik's images, full of mysterious nameless figures in masks and black-grey coats, made the cloisters and gardens of the abbey come to life. The director did a similar thing in 2015 when, during the Festival of Light, he realized an outdoor performance *From the Darkness*, at the premises of the Łazienki Palace. He made

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<sup>13</sup> See: *The Wings of an Angel*, directing and stage design by Leszek Mądzik, H.Ch. Andersen Puppet Theatre in Lublin, Lublin 1999; *The stream*, directing and stage design by Leszek Mądzik, Lebus Theatre in Zielona Góra, 2006; Pietro Mascagni, *Cavalleria Rusticana*, directing and stage design by Leszek Mądzik, costumes by Zofia de Ines, the Grand Theatre in Poznań, Poznań 2015.

<sup>14</sup> See: J. Marczyński, Mrok zamiast włoskiego słońca, "Ruch Muzyczny", no. 24, 2015; Anna S. Dębowska, "Rycerskość wieśniacza" i „Pajace”: dobre śpiewanie w Poznaniu, "Gazeta Wyborcza" on 7.02.2015.

the architecture come alive, putting actors on statues, who moved to the music, giving the sculptures a living aspect. The pond in Łazienki became an element of the scenography thanks to the colourful light, forms made of fabric immersed in its surface, and the mysterious figures floating in boats. The full moon, hanging above the space of this natural stage as a spotlight in one of the spectacles by the Artistic Stage, added some mysticism to the performance.

The director is sensitive to sounds, to which a proof are the spectacles made at KUL. On the occasion of his 70<sup>th</sup> birthday and, at the same time, the 45<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Artistic Stage, Mądzik took up a new challenge and created a spectacle-concert of Anna Maria Jopek in the Old Theatre in Lublin. The singer, known from a jazz repertoire, gave in to the artist from Lublin. The spectacle *Woman's Time* was created, in which, against the background of large vertical textural moving structures, Jopek does not sing, but gives over her voice to the music composed by herself and Robert Kubiszyn. The melodic line of the piece for the voice and the contrabass becomes a string, full of expression. The artist is almost invisible against the huge blocks of decorations which overwhelm her. The Lublin performance became a spectacle of sound and image. Mądzik created an image that harmonized with Jopek's melodies. The spectacle allures, although the admirers of the singer's talent may be disappointed as she does not sing the way her fans are used to. *Woman's Time* has not only shown a new sphere of Mądzik's creative skills, but, in my opinion, Jopek has discovered a remarkable dramaturgical strength of her voice.

Without any doubt, Mądzik constantly tempts new recipients, but also his old fans. His art is the result of the whole history of the theatre and stage design. The artistic theatre, in his understanding of the term, has become a show of illusion inferred from darkness and light, based on the perceptive abilities of the human eye. During 45 years of his artistic work, the artist has become the master of the subjugation of the three-dimensional stage space with the use of theatrical means. We can say that his art has been the avant-garde of the new times, of artists who, through the use of multimedia, want to show the mystical dimension of art. He has managed to do it without electronics. Nevertheless, it is not clear if it does not tempt Mądzik one day.

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### Streszczenie

Artykuł omawia twórczość Leszka Mądzika, skupiając się głównie na jego działalność w ramach autorskiego teatru Scena Plastyczna KUL. Działa on od lat 70. w ramach struktur administracyjnych lubelskiej katolickiej uczelni. Teatr Mądzika przetrwał wszystkie kryzysy ekonomiczne lat 70. i 80. oraz społeczne związane z okresem transformacji ustrojowej lat 90 XX wieku. Artysta pracował cały czas, tworząc spektakle o niezwykle spójnej estetyce. Realizowane przez niego widowiska cechują się brakiem warstwy słownej, uprzedmiotowieniem aktora i niezwykłą umiejętnością kreacji przestrzeni przy użyciu prozaicznych elementów jak: papier pakowy, liny czy z wykorzystaniem różnej waloryzacji oświetlenia jaką artysta uzyskuje przy użyciu dużej ilości reflektorów punktowych.

Autorka stara się wykazać jak działalność Mądzika, która przez większość krytyków sytuowała się zawsze poza głównym nurtem estetyki teatru polskiego przełomu XX i XXI wieku, tak naprawdę, okazuje się być w wielu wypadkach prekursorska względem m.in. użycia nowych mediów w teatrze czy konstrukcji bezimiennego współczesnego bohatera, Everymana nowego millenium.

Słowa kluczowe: teatr, scenografia, sztuka, Leszek Mądzik

### Summary

This article discusses the work of Leszek Mądzik, focusing mainly on his activities within the framework of the author's theater of the Artistic Stage of KUL. It has been operating since the 1970s within the administrative structures of the Lublin Catholic University. Mądzik Theater has survived all the economic crises of the 70s and 80s and the social connected with the period of political transformation of the 90s. The artist worked all the time, creating performances with extremely consistent aesthetics. His performances are characterized by a lack of verbal layer, an objectification of the actor and unusual ability to create space using prosaic elements such as wrapping paper, ropes or using different valorisation of the lighting he gains using a large number of spotlights.

The author tries to show how the activity of Mądzika, which most critics always placed outside the mainstream of the aesthetics of the Polish theater of the twentieth and twenty-first century, in fact, turns out to be in many cases precursors to, inter alia, the use of new media in the theater or construction of the nameless contemporary hero – an Everyman of new millennium.

Keywords: Theater, stage design, art, Leszek Mądzik