

Dietrich – wchodzi w bezpośredni kontakt z publicznością, siadając na kolanach jednemu z mężczyzn, namiętnie całując go w usta, a w chwilę później zrywając z głowy blond perukę, aby zaprezentować się widzom jako mężczyzna. Autor etiudy zdokumentował tutaj coś, co w tamtym czasie mogło funkcjonować jedynie na obrzeżach życia obyczajowego w Polsce, ale – jak widać – torowało już sobie drogę, przynajmniej w widowisku estradowym.

Zaskakująca śmiałość opisanej sceny wykracza daleko poza konwencję estradowego spektaklu erotycznego. Pod tym względem dokument nakręcony przez Tarkowskiego i Szarka stanowi niewątpliwie ewenement obyczajowy w kinie polskim dekady lat 70. Obaj ukazali i zanotowali ślad dokonującej się niepostrzeżenie przemiany obyczajowej. W etiudach powstających w łódzkiej Szkole Filmowej niejednokrotnie natrafiamy na tego rodzaju graniczne przy-

padki przełamywania społecznych tabu. Produkcja ta tworzyła swego rodzaju alternatywny wąski obieg. Jest bowiem rzeczą niezmiernie mało prawdopodobną, by podobnie śmiała pod względem obyczajowym scena z przyczyn cenzuralnych mogła się znaleźć w jakimkolwiek ówczesnym filmie fabularnym bądź dokumentalnym w szerokim rozpowszechnianiu.

Na zakończenie studiów reżyserskich w łódzkiej PWSFTviT Michał Tarkowski zrealizował – oceniony przez opiekuna pedagogicznego prof. Wojciecha Jerzego Hasa na notę celującą – znakomity film absolutoryjny pt. *Przerwane śniadanie Braci Montgolfier* (1979–1980). Oryginalność i klasa artystyczna tego utworu, który w niczym nie przypomina ćwiczenia warsztatowego, będąc pełnoprawnym dziełem sztuki filmowej, zasługuje po latach na uważne przestudiowanie i analizę w formie osobnego artykułu.

Surreal Dreams of a “Creative City” (or: How Camerimage Festival Tried to Convince Łódź to Stop Worrying and Love Modern Architecture)

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In January 2012, the *New York Times* published a tourist report entitled “45 places to go.” It included the city of Łódź, which was introduced in the following words:

The movie-making headquarters of the country (with a film school that started the careers of Roman Polanski and Andrzej Wajda), Łódź has seen its labyrinth of textile warehouses and industrial-era relics repurposed for artistic and entrepreneurial ventures. The latest is by director, David Lynch, who has a deal to establish a major film studio in a former 19th-century power plant in the city. Its makeover – which will also include a planetarium, a library, an exhibition space and a theater – is scheduled to be shown to the public in 2014. Additionally, the architect Frank Gehry, whose grandparents were from Łódź, is in talks to design a festival and

congress center with an avant-garde, building-block shape.^[1]

In 2015, it is already clear that neither Lynch’s studio nor Gehry’s congress centre will come into being due to major shifts in the city’s cultural policy, which has been widely commented upon in both local and national media. The following paper presents the most important events and critical voices raised during this debate, drawing primarily on an analysis of documentary content (newspaper articles and studies on the cultural policy produced by various public and non-profit entities).

[1] R.B. Doyle, “The Hollywood of Poland reclaims its industrial past”, *The New York Times*, 2012, no. 6 (January 8, 2012).

The setting: HollyŁódź and film culture

With over 710,000 inhabitants, Łódź is the third largest city in Poland, although its demography and economics were severely impacted by the decline of the textile industry during the 1990s. Compared with the rest of Poland, Łódź is still predominantly a worker's city, where middle and high-income groups form a small minority. The city faces significant social problems: rising unemployment, a strong sub-urbanization of higher-income families to peripheral districts, and a consequent social imbalance, especially in the city centre.

Throughout the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s (and up to the mid-1980s), the city was undeniably the centre of Polish film production, with quite a few state-owned institutions: the Fiction Film Production Studio (Wytwórnia Filmów Fabularnych), where the majority of Polish full-length movies were made, the Animated Film Production Studio (Se-Ma-For) and the Educational Film Production Studio (Wytwórnia Filmów Oświatowych). The decline of "HollyŁódź" started in the mid-1980s and was caused both by poor management decisions and the lack of a national policy towards film production (The Polish Film Institute in Warsaw was created as late as 2005).

In the early 1990s, the remnants of the city's film production studios started to be thought of

more as a stigma than a development asset. In interviews with local filmmakers and cultural policy makers, one statement was frequently repeated: "Nobody knew what to do."^[2] The premises of the former Fiction Film Production Studio was divided into several sub-sections: one was purchased by Opus Film (now one of the leading film and commercial producers in Poland), and one became the headquarters of Toya Group (which operates a sound-recording studio, as well as being a local TV broadcaster and internet provider). Two buildings remained state-owned, and up till today have served basically as a storage facility – either for film stock (a department of the National Film Archive, with its headquarters in Warsaw) or for props and costumes (a company called the Łódź Film Centre which now belongs to the city of Łódź). Studios dedicated to animated (Se-Ma-For) and educational films (WFO) underwent similar transformations: the first became a private company in 1999 and is still struggling to survive by providing services for foreign companies, while the former almost ceased to exist, and in 2012 was finally taken over by the Marshalls Office.

In the late 1990s, Łódź's efforts to overcome its stagnation engendered a discussion concerning the arts and cultural activity as amenities for economic development. It was observed that while film-sector employment in the city had faltered, the number of small firms and companies had increased. This observation led to the creation of the Media Cluster initiative. In June 2007, a letter of intent was signed by over 50 institutions – both commercial (almost every private company operating in Łódź decided to join) and public (including The National Film School, The University of Łódź, The Technical University, and The Academy of Fine Arts). The key objective of the Media Cluster was to "enhance the efficiency and competitiveness of the regional media industry by reinforcing the networks linking local entrepreneurs, business and professional bodies, research and development centres and support their business projects."^[3]

Unfortunately, the Media Cluster initiative has not been developed into a wider concept,

[2] In 2013 and 2014 a research group from the University of Łódź and the Polish National Film School conducted 50 in-depth interviews, each 90 minutes in length. Although there was some variation in the questions depending on the subject, key questions focused on the respondents' views on the following: the most important projects for film culture in the city, the key issues, events and people that influenced the city's approach to cultural policy, and the challenges they encountered. The outcomes of the project will be presented in an edited volume, which is to be published in 2015.

[3] *List intencyjny – deklaracja współpracy z 26 marca 2007* (*Letter of Intention, March 26, 2007*), available at: <http://www.mediaklaster.pl/wp-content/uploads/2007/03/list_intencyjny.jpg> [accessed: September 14, 2014].

mostly due to the fact that it coincided with yet another project which has been successfully pushed forward by city officials: The New Centre of Łódź, which was aimed at the redevelopment of the old industrial area and was to be carried out in conjunction with the city's general urban planning policy, which included a new railway station as its most important investment. The so-called EC₁ will materialize on a vast four-hectare area surrounding a former power plant (built in 1906, it supplied almost the whole city with electricity until it was closed in 2005). Along with the New Centre of Łódź project, new ambitious objectives were set: "now it will become a source of cultural spirit and will generate artistic energy" – promised acting mayor of Łódź Tomasz Sadzyński in 2010.[4]

Such statements were in-tune with the "creative city" concept, which by the late 1990s had become popular in a variety of contexts and interpretations, such as Richard Florida's "creative class" theory.[5] Within this theoretical framework, culture is increasingly being seen as a magic substitute to policy makers for the loss of factories and warehouses in deindustrialized areas, with the presence and concentration of artists and bohemians being linked to the city's economic development.[6] With the aim of exploiting the potential for stimulating artistic experimentation and improving their overall image, cities have shown a strong interest in becoming "creative" in hosting major cultural events and in planning "cultural quarters." As Jamie Peck observed, "Be creative – or die – is the new urban imperative: cities must attract the new 'creative class' with hip neighbourhoods, and art-scene – or they'll go the way of Detroit." [7] (This remark is particularly important in the case of Łódź, where debates organized by local think-tanks usually mention Detroit as a symbol of the "fallen city").

The protagonists: art, economy and politics

In early 2006, there was hardly any news that attracted local media more than the event that was described in the following way:

It is the 23rd of January - minus eighteen degrees. There are not many cars on the streets of Łódź, as the majority of them have been blocked by banks of snow. The ice-covered streets shine in the bright sunlight. The notary's office on Żwirki street is still empty at 10 a.m. Journalists and press photographers slowly arrive, and finally the heroes of the day appear: American director, David Lynch, architect and businessman, Andrzej Walczak, and the chief of the Camerimage film festival, Marek Żydowicz. They disappear behind closed doors, which in fact are glass, but the crystal cut distorts and blurs the image, and as a result, not much can be seen. The atmosphere is tense and time spent waiting in the cold air passes slowly. Finally, the doors open. Smiling men are sitting at the table – the three of them have just set up a foundation.[8]

The triumvirate seemed attractive and extraordinary, each of the founders had a good track record of original and successful enterprises. Mr Żydowicz headed (and still does) the Camerimage Film Festival organised in Toruń from 1993 to 1999; after his conflict with city authorities, he moved the Festival to Łódź, where the event was held from 2000 to 2009. (Since 2010, the Plus Camerimage Festival has taken place in Bydgoszcz). Lynch was a guest at Camerimage a couple of times; the outcome of this cooperation was the movie *Inland Empire*, which was co-produced by Żydowicz, who selected outdoor locations in Łódź, the cast, and also played a small part in the film. The third participant in the meeting was Andrzej Walczak – one of the richest Poles, an architect, and a businessman –

[4] A. Pawłowska, "Ec₁ start: politycy włączyli betoniarke", *Dziennik Łódzki*, 2010, no. 148 (June 30, 2010).

[5] R. Florida, *The Rise of the Creative Class and How It's Transforming Work, Leisure, Community and Everyday*, Basic Books, New York 2002.

[6] See for example: A. Scott, *The Cultural Economy of Cities: Essays on the Geography of Image-Producing Industries*, SAGE, London 2000.

[7] J. Peck, "Struggling with the Creative Class", *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 2005, no. 4 (29), p. 740.

[8] Un-authored public relations material [online], <<http://www.ecikolejowy.pl/pl/historia.html>> [accessed: December 20, 2014].

co-founder of the Atlas Group (manufacturer and seller of building materials). Since 2003, he has run Atlas Sztuki, which is considered one of the best Polish non-commercial galleries.

In the local media, the cooperation between Lynch, Żydowicz, and Walczak was associated with a somewhat similar venture by the famous trio from *The Promised Land* (a novel by Władysław Reymont and a movie by Andrzej Wajda). This narrative could be traced even in some statements by local officials. As Minister Grabarczyk pompously said at the official start of construction works in June 2010:

The history of this place is material for a good adventure movie. It was an abandoned area. Yet the saviours arrived. Łódź was lucky to attract Mr Żydowicz, who came to Łódź from far away and invited David Lynch. Both of them developed a good understanding with Mr Walczak, a local patriot. Together they discovered treasure. Now city residents will be able to see the diamond in its full glamour.[9]

Yet, the paths of “the saviours” soon diverged. After a conflict with the creators of Camerimage, Walczak withdrew his shares from the Foundation and Lynch delegated the authority to act on his behalf to Żydowicz, who thus gained a decisive voice and became the only person deciding about the World Art Foundation (apart from his Tumult Foundation, which organizes Camerimage). This institution played a crucial role in a scandal surrounding two architectural projects that were supposed to be symbols of the New Centre of Łódź.

The EC1 building: “David Lynch studio”

EC1 was owned by the city, which is in charge of redeveloping five-sixths (4 ha) of the building area where facilities (known as “EC1-West”) will host an interactive museum of tech-

nology. One sixth of the factory premises (0.7 ha – so-called “EC1-East”) was purchased in 2008 by the World Art Foundation (*Fundacja Sztuki Świata*) for just PLN 3,982 – the Foundation made use of a 99.9 per cent discount because EC1 was to have been redeveloped and dedicated to serve “unique cultural functions.”

During his stay in Poland in Spring 2010, Lynch described EC1-East as “a space for creativity and an exchange of ideas” that “would inspire the residents of Łódź as well as artists living in the city and all over the world.”[10] In local newspapers, however, the project was notoriously described as “David Lynch’s studio”, which led the public to believe that EC1-East would be dedicated to film production. This was certainly not the case, since the project itself is, to put it mildly, heterogenic to the extreme. It will include a 3D cinema, “a theatre of sound”, i.e. a studio for recording symphonic movie scores, a planetarium, exhibition spaces, studios for different types of artistic activity (including wood and plaster sculpture), a small hotel for workshop participants, a jazz club, a library, and a “lake of memory” (a place where residents of Łódź could record their memories for future generations). In an interview for the web portal *wprost.pl*, Żydowicz explained this brave concept in the following words:

Owing to David’s connections and the Camerimage Festival, we wanted to attract large international movie and music projects. In addition, we decided to designate a few dozen rooms as artistic workshops covering different fields of art. We wanted to help young, talented artists to be noticed by a global audience.[11]

The agreement assumed that the city would invest its own funds and EU funds to revitalise the building, while the Foundation would finance its fittings.

The realisation of that plan turned out to be more complicated than both the Foundation and the City might have expected. In April 2010, the Foundation asked the city (acting as the project leader) to allocate 21.5 million PLN in the city budget for fittings for the cultural centre. In response, the city authorities – after a row with

[9] Pawłowska, op. cit.

[10] “Zanurkować w głąb siebie. Z Davidem Lynchem rozmawia Dariusz Stańczuk” (interview), *Zwierciadło*, 2010, no 4.

[11] Żydowicz: *prezydent Łodzi celowo ukrywa nadużycia* [online], <<http://www.wprost.pl/ar/329446>> [accessed: December 20, 2014].

Mr Żydowicz which resulted in the Camerimage Festival leaving Łódź – decided to redeem its rights to EC1-East; the reason they gave was the Foundation's failure to fulfil the earlier agreement and to raise sufficient funds. When the Foundation refused to return the property, the city filed a lawsuit, and lawyers representing the city stated that the city had reserved the unconditional right to redeem the building within five years. The Foundation's attorney claimed in turn that this option was applicable only if the Foundation wanted to sell the facility to another entity, which was not the case. In addition, the Foundation repeatedly emphasised that the decision to redeem EC1-East would lead to the loss of 90 million PLN from an EU subsidy granted to the project (according to the city no such problem existed). Finally, Łódź City Hall won its litigation against the Foundation. The district court in Łódź upheld the judgment of the lower court and allowed the city to redeem from the Foundation the land on which the redeveloped heat and power plant was located. The City Hall was to pay 4,000 PLN for the property i.e. as much as the Foundation had paid to the city.

Over the course of this two-year legal battle, the World Art Foundation published an excerpt from a conversation between Hanna Zdanowska (City Mayor), Tomasz Kacprzak (Chairman of the City Council) and David Lynch, held in May 2011 in Los Angeles. Mr Kacprzak commented on this recording in the following statement:

It's only a pity the whole record of the meeting with Mr Lynch is not available, as we talked for 90 minutes, maybe 2 hours, while the video is only 2 minutes long. (...) The point is that City Hall cannot invest in assets belonging to private people or institutions. Had the World Art Foundation allocated the agreed funds, the city would not have had to do it, and the issue of redemption would have never been raised. We said that Mr Lynch would be able to use the building for his purposes even if it was owned by the city. But he did not accept the offer.[12]

The negotiations between city officials and Lynch were the "talk of the town" in 2011, heat-

ing up the local media and web forums – especially after Zdanowska confirmed that she "hadn't been able to organise this trip without Mr Żydowicz because neither the promotion department, nor the cultural department, nor even the investment department of City Hall had Mr Lynch's contact details." [13]

Furthermore, Lynch took the City's decision personally, and in May 2010, sent an open letter to Prime Minister Tusk relating to the case.[14] The Government Information Centre replied that there was no legal basis for the Prime Minister to intervene with the authorities of Łódź in regards to the redemption of EC1. It is now (2015) owned by the City and run by the company "Ec1 – Miasto kultury" (initially the decisive voice within this company belonged to the Foundation. In December 2014, after a long legal debate, the City agreed to assign almost 5 million zlotys to the Foundation in order to gain control over the Ec1 company). The EC1 building itself has been renovated according to the plan provided by the Foundation – which also means that in years to come the city will be forced to sustain a huge building, although its purposes remain unclear after Lynch had pushed out of the project.

The CLC building: Frank Gehry extravaganza

In numerous interviews, Żydowicz repeatedly stated that the festival – which used the facilities of the local opera – needed a new building exclusively for its own purposes. In a resolution signed in Autumn 2008, the City Council expressed its intention to provide sup-

[12] J. Sobczyńska, "Zdanowska i Kacprzak nagrani w studio Lyncha", *Dziennik Łódzki*, 2012, no. 160 (July 24, 2012).

[13] "Mam wątpliwości co do intencji Żydowicza. Z Hanną Zdanowską rozmawia Marzena Bomanowska", *Gazeta Wyborcza Łódź*, 2011, no. 148 (June 3, 2011).

[14] *List Davida Lyncha do Donalda Tuska z 15 maja 2010 (Letter from David Lynch to Donald Tusk, dated May 15, 2010)*, available at: <<http://www.tumultprasowy.pl/?m=20100515>> [accessed: December 20, 2014].

port for the Camerimage festival and to involve the city in the building of the festival centre. In return, Żydowicz promised that Camerimage would remain in Łódź for the next 19 years. In June 2009, the company, “Camerimage Łódź Center” (CLC) was established to build and manage the new festival-congress centre, which, above all, was to be the headquarters of the Camerimage festival. The company was created by the city of Łódź (represented by Deputy Mayor Tomaszewski) and two foundations associated with Żydowicz: the Tumult Foundation, which organizes the Camerimage film festival, and the World Art Foundation.

The CLC’s initial capital was ca. 11 mln. The city contributed 5 mln. and this was the only real money that was brought into the company. Both foundations made “a non-financial contribution”: the trademark of Camerimage (valued in the contract at 4 mln), and the “David Lynch brand” (2 mln). Żydowicz tried to convince the public that this was actually a bargain offer for the city, since – on the basis of the opinion from 2009 from the renowned Millward Brown SMG/KRC institute for market research and opinions – the promotional assets of the Camerimage brand during a one-year period were worth over 7 million PLN, whereas using the image of David Lynch for advertising purposes (also on an annual basis) would have been worth an estimated 1.5 mln. PLN (research included comparisons with the value of using the images of Bruce Willis, Oliver Stone and Polish film star Marek Kondrat). Żydowicz refuted charges of inflating the values of the brands, justifying that the amounts provided by Millward Brown for the period of a year, whereas the contract referred to a period of 19 years, as it was concluded for such a period and related to organizing the festival in Łódź (“The contributions should not be estimated in full,

for 19 years of using the brands, at the level of – respectively ca. 135 mln. and ca. 27 mln.”).[15]

World famous architect Frank Gehry was commissioned to sketch the concept for the festival centre. The building was to be the architectural icon of the city. According to supporters of this idea, Łódź would become “a second Bilbao”; in the same way that the Guggenheim Museum of Modern Art, which was also designed by Gehry, became the architectural icon of the city and still attracts crowds of tourists. The concept for the festival centre was presented at the last Camerimage in Łódź in December 2009. The facade would resemble a big movie screen, whereas the inside of the building – 37,000 square meters in total – would include a 3,000-seat theatrical-concert auditorium, four screening rooms and an exhibition space.

Despite the endorsement Żydowicz gained from film circles (letters of support sent by Volker Schlöndorff, Oliver Stone, and Vittorio Storaro, not to mention Lynch), in December 2009, the council members blocked the project. Local politicians stressed that Łódź should not have got involved in the investment until it was certain that either the Minister of Culture (through EU subsidies) or private investors would cover at least half of the expenses, which were estimated at 500 million PLN at that time. In January 2010, Żydowicz and his supporters announced a sit-in strike in the conference room of the city council (they occupied the venue for a week). Despite this pressure, council members did not change their minds. As a result, Żydowicz transferred the Camerimage festival to Bydgoszcz. This was only the beginning of the problems for local officials – it turned out that the City had no rights to the Camerimage Łódź Center project, as it controlled only a minority of the votes in the CLC (the shares were to increase during the course of the investment’s completion, and the city was to take 90 percent of the shares in the company after finalizing Gehry’s projects). The contract signed by former mayor Tomaszewski turned out to be so controversial that the public prose-

[15] “List otwarty Marka Żydowicza z 27 lipca 2012” (*Marek Żydowicz’s letter to the public opinion*, dated July 27, 2012), available at: <<http://www.dzienniklodzki.pl/artykul/627183,marek-zydowicz-o-nieprawidlowosciach-w-camerimage,id,t.html>> [accessed: December 20, 2014].

cutor's office in Łódź launched an investigation into this case.

Although Camerimage was no longer in Łódź, the company CLC was still operational. It ran out of money in October 2010, and since then the company has not paid salaries to its management board (including Żydowicz), and the resulting debts have steadily increased. However, winding up the company turned out to be difficult, since the city had 49.5% of the votes. Żydowicz argued that the festival centre might be financed in the future and continued to call for a rethinking of the city's decision. Despite a campaign in defense of CLC (in January 2011, another letter of support for the festival centre in Łódź was signed by prominent Polish artists – among them Andrzej Wajda, Agnieszka Holland, Andrzej Żuławski, and Jerzy Skolimowski),^[16] in 2012 the city finally decided to terminate the CLC-project. A local newspaper journalist commented on the matter in the following way:

These dreams cost a lot – over 30 mln. PLN. From this extremely costly lesson using the taxpayer's money, it can be learned how not to make decisions in the city council and management board. How not to believe in nice illusions that the name of David Lynch will change Łódź into Hollywood only due to the fact that the American director likes the winter light in Łódź. How not to set up an institution that nobody knows what to do with. It is supported by the city, but the private foundation appoints the principal. It is not possible to resolve it, as European Union money needs to be accounted for. This is a lesson that teaches us how not to establish companies with private entities without securing the interest of the city.^[17]

Conclusion

The “creative city” discourse served all three projects mentioned in the paper: [1] Media Cluster, [2] Lynch and Gehry, and [3] the modified concept of the New Centre of Łódź (without CLC). The first one was a typical “insiders” concept, conceived by local entities without any outside support. The second was, in contrast, put forward by entrepreneurs who did not live in Łódź, with strong support from international

circles and “big names” in the global art world. Finally, the third project received support from government politicians and Warsaw authorities (it has already been said that the New Centre of Łódź is primarily connected with the new railway station, which is financed by the Polish national railway company).

A key factor that explains the inability to carry out both Camerimage-projects (Lynch's studio and Gehry's congress centre) is that Polish leaders were not able to resolve long-standing, internal divisions within the cultural sector, which was necessary for assembling a unified coalition. Non-profit institutions as well as academic circles expressed their frustration that they had failed to establish sustained connections with project leaders both during the planning process and subsequently. Neither the city nor the project coordinators spent sufficient time evaluating the possible negative effects of the project, which ignored the fact that Łódź possessed substantial cultural resources (as the Media Cluster project stressed) up its sleeve. One could argue that a unique chance to revive the film culture of the city with a little help from EU-subsidies might have been squandered.

However, the New Centre of Łódź project, is currently taking shape and is due to be finalized by December 2015. According to local politicians, EC1-building will serve as the city's centre of audiovisual culture; unfortunately, details regarding its objectives and structure still remain unclear.

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[16] *List otwarty – apel w sprawie Camerimage Łódź Centre z dnia 26 stycznia 2011 (Letter to the public opinion – The call in support of Camerimage Łódź Centre, dated January 26, 2011), available at: <<http://www.tumultprasowy.pl/?m=201101>> [accessed: December 20, 2014].*

[17] M. Bomanowska, “Smutny koniec marzeń”, *Gazeta Wyborcza Łódź*, 2011, no. 280 (November 22, 2011).