

NATASZA ZIÓLKOWSKA-KURCZUK*

THE THEATRE AND THE CAMERA. ON CINEMATIC MEETINGS WITH THE THEATRE OF LESZEK MĄDZIK.

1. THE PAIN OF THE SPACE

Leszek Mądzik's theatrical performances, created with the Artistic Stage of KUL, clearly bring to my mind cinematic references. And so a movie show takes place in the complete darkness. Once I had an opportunity to watch a film all alone at the cinema. It was quite a strange and disturbing feeling. Like a dream, we sometimes come to believe that it has become our trap which will never end. A solitary movie show feels just as disturbing as Haruki Murakami's novels in which the narrator leads the reader through a soft, impenetrable space, absorbed by darkness. The space in Murakami's works has sensual attributes; it is alive, it moves, it breathes. This space fascinates, but also frightens at the same time. Hidden somewhere inside it, there is a gleaming stream of light; a slightly open door, behind which a man-sheep is lurking, a mysterious creature from an inscrutable world.

It is similar with the performances by the Artistic Stage of KUL. The spectator becomes emerged in a dream, even though he is convinced that he is sitting in the theatre audience. The complete darkness brings to mind a similarity to a movie show as Leszek Mądzik does not show a play, but constructs the darkness. It is a sphere in which perception borders pain. The spectator would like to penetrate deeper into the illusion of this half-real world, but in this case, the sight is not always reliable. Sometimes the spectator loses the certainty whether he perceives a theatrical piece or it is only his impression. His loneliness loses the sense of the other spectator's presence. I did not have an opportunity to watch any of the performances by the Artistic Stage of KUL as a solitary, individual spectator. However, it seems to me that such a situation might be emotionally unbearable. As it is like the fear of death, for which we are not prepared. But is a man ever fully prepared for death?

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2. THE THEATRE AS A DREAM

The psychoanalytical film theory, which refers to dreams, appeared at the very beginning of the medium itself. It is due to the way in which a movie is experienced, an image on a big screen, projected in a dark room, that such references are made. The filmviewer is condemned to himself and his own imagination. Here, certain agitations of the mind operate more than the rational reception. It was expressed in 1916 by Hugo Munsterberg in his publication "The Photoplay. A psychological study". He wrote: "The photoplay obeys the laws of the mind rather than these of the outer world".¹

However, the process of projection-identification proposed by Edgar Morin at the end of 1950s became the most popular. Wiesław Godzic writes about this concept in the following manner: "Morin quotes numerous reports by doctors and psychologists, in which their patients, when recounting their dreams, precede them with a statement: *It was something like what we can see at the cinema*. From Morin's book, we can deduce a catalogue of similarities between a movie and a dream: the dynamics of dreams and movies overcomes the boundaries of time and space; similar figures are at work: reductions, augmentations, condensations. Morin is conscious of the proportions to which the cinema can be compared to a dream. This type of reasoning organizes his whole argument: he believes that even though the cinema reflects the reality, it is not limited to it because it allows us to enter the world of dreams."²

The psychoanalytical film theory focuses explicitly on the film viewer. Here, he is the most important link to the interpretation of the sense. Without the viewer, the cinematic message would have no sense to anyone but the film maker. I can see two other important elements in this type of thinking: darkness and the stream of light, which bring to mind the concept of Gilles Deleuze. The French philosopher goes even further, adding movement and time, which he deems fundamental in the perception of a cinematic piece. Deleuze treats the cinematic reality in philosophical categories and compares the world to a great screen, frozen as if after a big explosion, on which a strong beam of light casts an image (a certain emanation) which is, for the viewer (the human), a reality.³

It's analogous with the performances by the Artistic Stage of KUL. Leszek Mądzik, during a theatrical session, puts the audience in a situation similar to that of a movie viewer in a cinema hall. One might even risk to state that Leszek Mądzik is making a live movie - he does not record the illusion on a tape (or other medium),

¹ Hugo Munsterberg, *Dramat kinowy. Studium psychologiczne*, 1916, after: Wiesław Godzic, *Film i psychoanaliza. Problem widza*, Wydawnictwo UJ, Cracow 1991, p. 31.

² Wiesław Godzic, *Film i psychoanaliza. Problem widza*, Wydawnictwo UJ, Cracow 1991, p. 35.

³ See: Gilles Deleuze, *Kino 1: Obraz-ruch; 2: Obraz-czas*, Wydawnictwo Słowo/Obraz/Terytoria, Warsaw 2010.

but acts it out in front of the audience's eyes, with the help of the actors and the specific machinery. Mądzik's machinery reminds me of making special effects for a film with the use of the analogue means, that is without the use of virtual space and digital techniques. The illusion in Mądzik's theatre is achieved through very simple devices animated by the actors and, most importantly, the light, which is administered in doses, allowing the reception on the verge of sensuous perception. The theatre takes place on the edge of reality, imagination and a genetic memory. The audience is not sure if it is really happening. They enter the reality of a dream while been awake. A performance of the Artistic Stage of KUL is a piece quite limited in time and I believe that the length of the spectacle is adjusted to the perceptive capability of a person who needs to put great physical effort, most of all, strain the eyes, in order to be drawn into this unreal world. Here, I can, once again, see the similarity to the cinema. Movie shows in 4, 5, 6 or 7D cinemas, where the viewer engages several senses, but the perception of reality becomes constantly unsettled, usually last 20-30 minutes because being immersed in the sensual illusion for too long might become fatal for the human organism. Besides, in such cinemas safety measures are implemented. Fortunately, with Leszek Mądzik's theatre, it is not necessary, but the sensual effect is quite similar and also limited in time.

3. THE CAMERA PROBLEM

The problem with the performances by the Artistic Stage of KUL is rather specific. It is the inability to communicate the essence of this theatre through media such as film or television. The performances lose their essence when we try to transform them into another medium. It is certain that neither film nor television coverage, nor even photography, are able to render this stage illusion. Every transformation of such kind requires, most of all, a greater amount of light, so that the registered image could be viewed in circumstances which are by no means favourable for it. Because few viewers watch television in complete darkness. Television screen itself enhances the difficulties, because it generates different reflections and image distortions. Thus, created is an outline of the spectacle, its specific character is recorded, several images or a fragment of a dramaturgical sequence. You can say that such a recording is a certain documentation of the performance. When it comes to photography, a new quality can sometimes be obtained, a single image that is a complete message. However, you can doubt if it overlaps with the message of the spectacle. The best auteur photographs created on the basis of Leszek Mądzik's theatrical images are, in my opinion, taken by Stefan Ciechan.

Without a doubt, Marek Tarka, a cinematographer and reporter, working for the Polish Television, who died, prematurely, at the age of 57 in 2001, was unmat-

ched when it comes to documenting Leszek Mądzik's spectacles. His vast archives contain numerous tapes from the reporter's travels with the Artistic Stage of KUL to various parts of the world. What remains of them is not only the documentation of Leszek Mądzik's spectacles and workshops, but also the record of other events, places and people. I have used the resources from these archives more than once while preparing different programs and films about Leszek Mądzik and the Artistic Stage of KUL. The analysis of the materials provides interesting information on what kind of artist Leszek Mądzik is. It turns out that some trails and materials are long present in the artist's work. I have paid specific attention to the use of brown paper and wheelbarrows. It seems that Mądzik has been struggling with the matter of thick brown paper for many years. It's a very flexible and resistant fabric. You can build vast spaces of it, "build it" around the actor or create traditional theatrical costumes with it. Whereas the wheelbarrows are used by Mądzik to cope with the matter, its weight and the physical experience of it. For me, it is interesting that both paper and wheelbarrows appear also in the seemingly "different" spectacle by the Artistic Stage of KUL - *the Furrow*. Further, I am going to write more about the spectacle itself. I believe that the film materials made by Marek Tarka can be the subject for a more thorough analysis. However, it is unquestionable that it was the cinematographer from Lublin who made Leszek Mądzik realize that a greater intensity of light is required (approximately about 20-30 per cent more than during the spectacles) to record his performances in order for the camera to make an image similar to the theatrical one and, at the same time, clear in its message.

4. THAT WHICH IS NOT SEEN

When, at the beginning of the 1990s, I first made a program about Leszek Mądzik for TV Polonia as part of a cycle *Who is who in Poland*, I used the materials by Marek Tarka who was also the author of photographs for the whole reportage. The materials from the spectacles were mostly of illustrative character. For me, it was an important meeting, the first direct one with an author whose theatre I had known since the 1980s, from the times of my cultural studies at Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań. However, during my university years, Leszek Mądzik was, for me, a person from a completely different world, not only due to the character of his theatre, but also because Lublin and the Catholic University, with its spirituality, were entities also on the verge of reality from a perspective of hundreds of kilometres (I was born and raised in Poznań). Years later, when I settled in Lublin and became acquainted with KUL and Leszek Mądzik, that world became more real. During this first cooperation, I discovered that Leszek Mądzik has a unique sense of humour. I believe that, for the man who carries in himself such dark ima-

ges, it is necessary for life. Fortunately, these images find their emanation in his spectacles. To subdue the existential fear, the terrifying sense of emptiness, the image of the inscrutable world –I believe it is the most important message of the Artistic Stage of KUL.

The making of *She Departs*(2003) was an opportunity for another very important meeting. While working on the reportage documenting the preparations for the premiere, I had an opportunity to see “Mądzik’s machinery” for the first time. It turned out that the space for a theatrical play is rather small; that it is created with black fabric as well as several actors who animate suitcases and portraits of mothers placed on creased brown paper. And the figure of the mother herself, collapsing into the depths of a grave. These images remain in the memory most clearly. The images and the piercing vocalise by Urszula Dudziak. In my opinion, the important part of the work was the manner of communication, that is how Leszek Mądzik directs the performance. It turned out that he does it with the help of a big handset from an old telephone, which allows him to communicate with a person offstage, that animates the actors and gives them the instructions of the director who, himself, takes the position of the audience. Leszek Mądzik takes part in every spectacle and sets his theatrical matter in motion; builds its specific sort of artistic dramaturgy, pace and rhythm. Thanks to the music, Mądzik’s remarks uttered in whisper, but also emotional and impulsive, are not heard by the audience. Obviously, technology has changed and the old worn-out, crackling handset, tightly covered in duct tape, has been replaced by modern devices. However, the rule has remained the same: Leszek Mądzik, like a demiurge, sets his theatre in motion.

On the occasion of this experience, I have realized that, when it comes to the Artistic Stage of KUL, the most important thing about the film or television message is to show what is not seen during the performance or what is not accessible to the audience’s perception. It turns out that to reveal the backstage to the television viewer does not interfere with the subsequent viewing of the performance. The theatrical audience, being aware of “theatre kitchen” is still being seduced by the inscrutable magic of Mądzik’s theatre.

5. A VISIT TO BELARUS AT THE TIME OF THE “BREAKTHROUGH”

What is not accessible to the perception of the average person was also part of a reportage entitled *A journey to Minsk*, realized when the Artistic Stage of KUL stayed in Minsk, at the Belarusian State Academy of Arts, in May 2009. The theatre kitchen revealed itself in its full form in the cinematographic photos of the *Moisture* spectacle, which we had an opportunity to shoot twice and then put together as one performance. Thanks to this, we achieved a simultaneity of action

– the television viewer was able to follow the spectacle and, at the same time, see what is happening backstage at that given moment. For us, it was a remarkable experience and I hope that we were able to deliver at least part of this sensation to the audience of this reportage.

The Academy of Arts is the only school in Belarus educating artists for the theatre, fine arts, film and television, as well as stage design. The Artistic Stage of KUL performed two spectacles there: *Moisture* and *Furrow*, and Leszek Mądzik carried out workshops that ended with a performance of a theatrical etude. The spectacles were accompanied by an exhibition of Leszek Mądzik's posters. The visit of the Artistic Stage of KUL to Minsk was organized by the Polish Institute in Minsk and the Polish Embassy. It took place at the time when changes started in Belarus, aiming to direct the country more towards the western Europe. This was reflected by, among other things, the appearance of a McDonald restaurant in the centre of the city. It may seem trivial, but it became a symbol of those changes. The McDonald sign was one of few links between the two worlds for the young actors from the Artistic Stage of KUL, who no longer knew Russian and for whom everything in Minsk was exotic and incomprehensible. The McDonald sign-board was the only one they could easily read. It was there that they could find what they knew well. On the other hand, the students from the Belarusian State Academy of Arts knew English and so a certain understanding between the young adepts of art from both countries could happen. Here, though, a visible cultural difference began. One of the Belarusian students asked, during a meeting with Leszek Mądzik, why this Artistic Stage was so *cool*, which caused consternation. It is a very good example of the problems that arise when cultural differences are overlaid with linguistic ones. And thus we arrive at what is the most important issue- a certain kind of mission that the Artistic Stage of KUL and Leszek Mądzik had to carry out in Minsk.

I need to add that the television crew (the author of the text and the cameraman, Jacek Grzelak) went to Belarus incognito. Officially, we were the actors of the Artistic Stage of KUL. It was important as to obtain permits, documents and other formalities would have been a considerable problem. Therefore, for the benefit of the Artistic Stage of KUL, we officially documented the stay at the Belarusian State Academy of Arts and Leszek Mądzik's workshops. The visit resulted in a 30-minute long reportage *A journey to Minsk*, which presented not only the artistic achievements, but also Minsk from the perspective of Leszek Mądzik's wandering. We often used a hidden camera, because to use a camera in the space of the city caused a reaction from policemen and other guards, carrying Kalashnikov rifles, who suddenly appeared everywhere. Two men with such rifles even guarded the poster exhibition and, during the vernissage, they ostensibly strolled among the invited guests. We were not even allowed to take pictures in a gigantic supermarket, with shelves full of different goods. Different types of meat especially caught the attention of Leszek Mądzik who tried to photograph them. Salesladies in red and

blue aprons, positioned beside each other, were bustling behind the counters. I'm writing about it to outline the climate of the visit.

Leszek Mądzik visited Minsk having read a remarkable book, *Minsk: A Guide to the City of the Sun*⁴, whose author is a Belarusian architect and conceptual artist, Artur Klinov. In this book, he talks about Minsk as of a great utopian city built like a gigantic scenography on the ruins of a former XIX century European city. The old tissue of the city can now be seen only in the neighbourhood of the Cathedral of Saint Virgin Mary. After the demolition of old districts, built were the facades of socrealistic palaces in which the new residents settled, as well as the gates that, according to Klinov, opened up the road to the City of the Sun, with a six-lane Independence Avenue cutting across it, and a whole system of prospects, streets, squares and metro lines that destroyed everything that was once there. Minsk is a city where utopia has become the daily life.

The opening up of Belarus to Europe and the world at the beginning of the XXI century was, similarly to the aforementioned architecture of Minsk, only apparent, as there was not much behind the facade. This opening had no spiritual support though. The churches were replaced with warehouses and museums. The Independence Square in Minsk is so big three bus-stops, the House of the Government, which is the seat of the Parliament, the Minsk Regional Executive Committee, the Belarusian State University, the Maxim Tank Belarusian State Pedagogical University, the Minsk Hotel, the Main Post Office, the Office of the Minsk Metro, and, finally, the monument of Vladimir Ilyich Lenin find their location there. Hidden underground are three levels of the shopping centre "Capital" and several levels of an underground parking lot. On this vast square, there is also one of few Catholic churches in Belarus, the Church of Saints Simon and Helen, known as the red church. We managed to secretly capture a film frame depicting a symbolic overlay of different semantic spaces. On the facade of one of the university buildings, there was a billboard devoted to the Independence Day. On the other side, next to the red church, there was an enormous portrait of John Paul II and, between them, the statue of Lenin. Thus, the Independence Square encompassed everything that was important for Belarus at the time of the apparent breakthrough.

6. SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCES IN BELARUS

However, a breakthrough was made by Leszek Mądzik. He came with a roll of brown paper, with his thinking in forms, and destroyed the space of the traditional stage in the Ye. Mirovich Theatre Studio, at the Belarusian State Academy of Arts

⁴ See: Artur Klinov, *Mińsk, przewodnik po Mieście Słońca*, Wydawnictwo Czarne, Warsaw 2008.

in Minsk. Leszek Mądzik clashed the fossilized aesthetics of the Academy with the aesthetics of his performances, *Moisture* and *Furrow*. He distorted the way in which the Belarusian students previously thought about art and, especially, the theatre art. At the school in Minsk, the starting point for the theatre has long been the word and dramaturgy. During the workshops with Leszek Mądzik, the students noticed that if you started with the form, you could also show the content. The work on a theatrical etude began with composing a theatrical costume from brown paper. Interestingly, instead of choosing abstract, sculptural forms, the students focused on the creation of costumes that pertained to the tradition of the theatre or even to specific epochs and styles. The climax of the etude was the tearing off of the masks and costumes and then, the return to oneself – the transition from an actor to a theatre audience. And yet, the work on the scene, which was not too complex dramaturgically, greatly changed the way in which the Belarusian students thought about the theatre. They were surprised themselves, but decided to experiment further and even expressed a wish to do an internship with Leszek Mądzik.

Without a doubt, for the Belarusians, a distinct spiritual experience was the performance of *Furrow*, perhaps the only one in the artist's legacy played out in full light, usually at a church. In Minsk, there was a plan to perform it outdoors, in the yard of the Belarusian State Academy of Arts. It is hard to say if it was just a coincidence that it took place in a completely different space. On May 13th there was heavy rain which thwarted the plans. The hosts did not want to allow for the show to be cancelled so, together with Leszek Mądzik, they searched for a place where *Furrow* could take place. Accidentally, they came across a huge hangar scheduled to be demolished. It was quite a strange place which hosted a carpentry shop, a pile of rubbish, and some cars as the hangar was also a garage. However, the space was vast and spacious, well suited for the performance of *Furrow*. Professor Vladimir Mischczanyk, the then dean of the Theatre Faculty at the Belarusian State Academy of Art in Minsk, was not very eager to agree to such a turn of events because he considered the place as not worthy enough for the art, but finally he conceded.

And thus, on May 13th, 2009, in the hangar set for demolition, amidst boards, wood shavings, and garbage crammed in the corners, in the vicinity of the absurdly looking cars, an unusual thing happened. It was not the spectacle that was important because, seemingly, it was not different than *Furrow* performed at other places (and I myself have seen the performance at least a couple of times). The important thing happened when the performance ended. Namely, there was an incredible, long silence and you could feel the thoughts buzzing in the Belarusians' heads. Understanding little, they remained in this deafening silence and the spectacle turned into an extraordinary, almost religious, mystery. Perhaps, for some of those people, it was the first time when they experienced such emotions. And later, like many audiences in other places where *Furrow* was performed, they took bits of brown paper as keepsakes and immersed their hands in the water from the eponymous furrow, wanting to seize for themselves even the smallest piece of this mystical

moment. I believe this to be one of the greatest achievements of the Artistic Stage of KUL in which I had an opportunity to participate. The punchline of this event was the fact that a decision was made not to demolish the hangar, but to renovate it and allocate it for a modern theatre hall, with no traditional division into the stage and the audience.

7. A CLOSE CONTACT IN FRANCE

My cinematographic meeting with Leszek Mądzik and the Artistic Stage of KUL, which took place in a XII century Cistercian abbey in Pontigny, in Burgundy, France, was completely different and in a completely different space. There, I shoot the photos to my newest film, *Leszek Mądzik's Mirrors*.

There were fields of sunflowers, picturesque little towns and medieval architecture. In Burgundy, you get the impression that no great world wars or totalitarian systems ever took place. Everything has its own pace there and time slowly accumulates in space. Empty churches, which are an undeniable sign of modernity, are taken care of by social associations, like in Auxerre, or by a handful of monks and the local community, like in Pontigny. In Pontigny, during the Andrei Tarkovsky *Festival of Sacred Arts*, *Furrow* was presented to the international audience in the presbytery of a gothic church. There, the audience was also focused, but its character was not as mystical as it was in Belarus. The most important thing about Leszek Mądzik's presence in Pontigny was the atmosphere of a direct contact that he created in the international group of actors while working on the spectacle *The Passage from Darkness to the Light*. The performance, despite Mądzik's aesthetics, was built with words. The texts were a metaphorical transcription of peculiar "confessions" made by the actors in front of the director – Leszek Mądzik. The artist himself was perplexed by some of the stories as they were very honest. The recordings of the confessions used during the performance were in the actors' native language, which, additionally, gave an unusual sonorous effect.

However, this method of working created a great trust between the actors and Mądzik. My cameraman, Paweł Banasiak, captured on his camera the incredible contact between the creators of *The Passage from Darkness to the Light*. Yet, this was not about the theatre itself, but also about being together between the rehearsals, when they joked together and they laughed at the mistakes they made themselves. In the interviews, the actors admitted that they had worked with various directors – they were, after all, from different countries and cultures – but their cooperation had never been so close, almost intimate.

This was rather unusual because, in most performances by the Artistic Stage of KUL, the actor is treated rather subjectively as an element of a theatrical machinery,

a part of a living theatrical image. The performance realized in France was based on the actor-the human being and his individual experiences, personally articulated and recorded. It was a series novelty in Mądzik's theatrical work.

8. ROGÓŻNO AND GUCIO

While making the *Leszek Mądzik's Mirrors* movie, we managed to record a sequence in a small recreational house in Rogóžno, which is a kind of a solitary place for the artist. A completely different Leszek Mądzik appeared to us there. The house is situated at the very end of a line of houses and, behind it, there is a meadow with haystacks that, for several years, have remain unharvested and there is only a forest wall beyond it. Leszek Mądzik has become attached to this gentle landscape and especially to the trees, one of which was taken down by a huge storm. Particularly interesting is the bark of old specimens – an unusual texture that changes depending on the angle of sunrays. Mądzik has recognized well its properties. Among his photographs, you can find many that depict the bark of different, sometimes exotic, trees. From the terrace of his house, Mądzik often observes the play of lights in the surrounding space and, especially, the mists which appear in the meadow in the morning. The ideas for his spectacles and set designs arise in this solitary place – it is a kind of a workshop for the artist. We had an opportunity to film a scenography model for an opera which Leszek Mądzik directed at the Grand Theatre in Poznań. An unusual creative invention and ingenuity revealed itself there. Mądzik created the model from very diverse materials; the most surprising of which was the use of dry spaghetti. At the same time, it turned out that the artist often constructed microscopic spotlights to see how the light worked on the constructed scenography. It is quite an arduous conceptual work which, perhaps, requires this type of concentration.

During his stays in Rogóžno, Mądzik is accompanied by a Chihuahua dog with a cute name, Guccio. He is the artist's confidant, the first recipient of the projects and concepts, maybe even the first "consultant." Mądzik often carries out very serious disputes with Guccio, but the dog also disciplines the artist in a way; forces him to go for a walk or to interact with the neighbours. It may be the best way to get some distance towards one's work or to look at one's ideas from another side. Rogóžno is a world of peace, quiet and nature, which differs substantially from the world full of people, trips and intense experiences during long, often exotic, artistic journeys. There, Leszek Mądzik can, for example, cook a tomato soup for himself, but it is Guccio who is the most important character there.

9. WEAVER

Zbigniew Herbert

“Textile”

A wood of threads narrow fingers and looms of faithfulness
the dark fluctuations of anticipation
so stay with me fragile memory
dispense your infinity
A faint light of conscience changeless clatter
measures years islands ages
to finally carry to a nearby shore
a boat and a plot of warp and a shroud⁵

Herbert's poem quoted above speaks most emphatically about Leszek Mądzik's spectacles. Since he graduated from a secondary school of art in Kielce, Mądzik has remained a weaver. The clues found in Herbert's poem can also be found in Leszek Mądzik's performances and not only in those given by the Artistic Stage of KUL. Looms, threads, infinity, faint light, shore, plot, warp, shroud – all of them refer to many of Leszek Mądzik's performances. You may say that Mądzik is constantly creating a textile, but it is almost organic, thus usually connected with water, this thoroughly feminine element, life-giving and eternal. He often adds the soil and its variations to it. Water, soil and textile, as well as grain are linked rather with life than death, even though it is death that is usually recalled in the context of Leszek Mądzik's theatre. However, it seems to me that the artist is persistently looking for this boundary between life and death, trying to see what may be found on the other side or at the transition point. The same can be said about the boundaries between light and darkness – in my latest movie, *Leszek Mądzik's Mirrors*, Lech Majewski accurately says that darkness is the cradle of light.

The very concept of the textile refers to a story. We have the plot and the structure of a story. In old cultures, textiles were the medium of universal messages. And it is similarly with Mądzik's spectacles. They are a sort of textile, three-dimensional, spatial, actuated by a specific theatrical machinery, by the actors, but limited in time and properly lit. Mądzik, like a sculptor, connects the semantics of a piece of art with its substance. Here, the significance is contained in the form itself. Again, it brings Mądzik's theatre closer to a sculpture. It would also be beneficial to quote a great Polish and Brazilian sculptor born in Jabłoń, in the Lublin province, Count August Zamoyski, who, in his theoretical reflections, said: “Art is a synthesis of the artist's attitude towards the surrounding reality. It

⁵ <https://poema.pl/publikacja/85812-tkanina>, access 15.09.2015

is his reaction to the tragedy of existence.⁶ (...) The substance of life – is devilishly hidden! Art, though, does not seek a solution, but penetrates the essence of the mystery, uniting with the Substance; and the artist blends into it so intimately, so familiarly that it stops being a mystery – he gets drunk on its presence, revives in himself the trust in existence and, thus, gives the meaning to life!”⁷ And, in his letter to Professor Władysław Tatarkiewicz, he also adds: “Art is our escape towards God.”⁸

CONCLUSION

My acquaintance with Leszek Mądzik dates back to the 1980s when, as a student of Cultural Studies at Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań, I unsuccessfully tried, several times, to get to a performance by the Artistic Stage of KUL. Usually there were several times as many willing to see the play than there were places in the theatrical sphere. The 80s were a time of the student theatre, which was then one of the most active fields of uncompromising art, reacting strongly to the system that broke individuals and, especially, destroyed individualism. In my opinion, the most important voice of the generation was the Theatre of the Eighth Day. It was not only the contents of the performances, but mostly the notion of an actor as an active, creative and uncompromising individual, as well as the theatrical language in which a word was the result of an improvisation and was connected to a movement, and the theatre itself appeared as a dynamic, active process and not a finished piece. To live the theatre – that remained the main idea of the “Eights”; a group which became an artistic commune. This socio-cultural and aesthetic context is still very important for me.

Leszek Mądzik and the Artistic Stage of KUL found themselves at the perimeters of this artistic *boom*. Even then, this black theatre of grand silence carried a universal message which has been resistant to time and the great social and cultural transformations. The aesthetics and the language of Mądzik’s theatre still remain universal. Recently, I have had an opportunity to see and record for a television program two fragments from Leszek Mądzik’s newest work – the spectacle *Woman’s Time*– which he created together with a vocalist and musician, Anna Maria Jopek, and an outstanding double bass player, Robert Kubiszyn. From my observations of these small fragments, it seems that the language of Leszek Mądzik’s theatre has

⁶ August Zamoyski, *Sztuka I Substancja*, “Sztuka I Krytyka”, 1958, no. 33/34, p. 163. Author’s emphases

⁷ Ibidem, p. 165. Author’s emphases

⁸ August Zamoyski, Władysław Tatarkiewicz, *Listy*, “Poezja”, no. 1, January 1979, p. 73. Author’s emphases

once again drifted into new territories. It is the first spectacle in which the sound, performed live, has become a medium of dramaturgy and sense, and it “pulls” the machinery, becomes the substance of life.

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MOVIES

1. *Jubileusz Sceny Plastycznej of KUL*, directed by Natasza Ziółkowska-Kurczuk, photography by Tomasz Smyk, produced by TVP Lublin, 2005.
2. *Ochodzi*, a working material for the “Afisz” program, directed by Natasza Ziółkowska-Kurczuk, photography by Tomasz Smyk, produced by TVP Lublin, 2005.
3. *Podróż do Mińska*, directed by Natasza Ziółkowska-Kurczuk, photography by Jacek Grzelak, produced by TVP Lublin, 2009.

Streszczenie

Artykuł porusza problem filmowości spektakli „Sceny Plastycznej KUL”. Z drugiej strony podejmuje problem filmowego zapisu dzieł teatralnych Leszka Mądzika. Autorka pisze o tym z perspektywy reżysera filmowego, a także badacza analizującego sztuki wizualne. Odnosi się do psychologicznych i poststrukturalnych teorii filmowych, obecnych zwłaszcza w nauce francuskiej. W artykule odnaleźć można również osobiste refleksje dotyczące zapisów filmowych dzieła teatralnego. Autorka próbuje dać też odpowiedź na pytanie, w jaki sposób obecność kamery przekształca spektakle.

Słowa kluczowe: teatr, scenografia, sztuka, film, Leszek Mądzik.

Summary

The article deals with the problem of filmmaking of the theatrical performances created by the Artistic Stage of KUL. On the other hand, concerns the issue of the film recording of Leszek Mądzik's stage works. The authoress writes about it from the perspective of a film director and as a researcher analyzing visual arts. It refers to psychological and post-structural film theories, especially in french science. In the article can be also find personal reflections on the film recordings of theatrical work. The authoress tries to give an answer to how the presence of the camera transforms the performances.

Keywords: Theater, stage design, art, film, Leszek Mądzik