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Experiencing art in city space on the example of the environment of the Galeria Labirynt in Lublin

Doświadczanie sztuki w przestrzeni miasta na przykładzie otoczenia Galerii Labirynt w Lublinie

Abstract

Art in public space is still untapped potential. The garden at 'Labirynt' Gallery is an opportunity to publish a work of art and a place for a wide range of artistic activities. Here, access to works will be free and universal, and the art exhibited in public space will enter into a dialogue with the viewer. The design concept was influenced by the terrain, the existing vegetation, and the gallery building style. A new communication system, elements of small architecture, plantings, and illuminations were designed. The design of the Gallery's surroundings was to make the facility recognizable and friendly.

Keywords: art, urban space, sculpture garden, Galeria Labirynt, Lublin

Streszczenie

Sztuka w przestrzeni publicznej to nadal niewykorzystany potencjał. Ogród przy Galerii Labirynt ma być szansą na upublicznienie dzieł sztuki i miejscem do szerokiego spektrum działań artystycznych. Tutaj dostęp do dzieł będzie darmowy i powszechny. Na koncepcję miały wpływ ukształtowanie terenu, istniejąca roślinność i styl budynku galerii. Zaprojektowano nowy układ komunikacyjny, elementy małej architektury, nasadzenia oraz iluminacje. Projekt otoczenia galerii uczyni obiekt rozpoznawalnym i przyjaznym.

Słowa kluczowe: sztuka, przestrzeń miejska, ogród rzeźb, Galeria Labirynt, Lublin

1. INTRODUCTION

We observe a positive phase of transformations in Polish cities – we see new glass buildings, care for their decor and surroundings, use new materials and technologies in arranging green areas, and improve the disabled. Meanwhile, art in public space is still untapped potential. Yet, artists and project curators want to enter the urban space in the awareness and memory of the local community.

The concept of globalization appeared in the world economic literature in the mid-1980s, and since then, the globalization process has been a key challenge for modern man (Osadnik, 1997; Zbyrad, 2006). Although globalization is taking place in the economic dimension, its consequences are also noticeable in the social dimension. It is most appropriate to define globalization as a process taking place in the economic and social dimensions: “globalization – it is a socio-economic process aimed at transforming the earth into a single common market driven by the pursuit of profit maximization, on which everything can be produced and sold everywhere thanks to trade without borders” (Główczyk, 2000: 153). The undeniable fact is that every economic activity does not occur in a vacuum but among people and for people. Therefore, economic processes cannot be viewed as isolated from society. Man is one of the links in the economic chain, participates in the successes and failures of undertaken actions. Thus, globalization covers economic relations and affects the sphere of political, social, and cultural relations. The process of globalization is still ongoing, and it is difficult to predict what its effects will bring. Globalization has its advantages and disadvantages. The former is the share of the economy, profit, and matter, and the latter are deeply embedded in social life, addictive and enslaving. The negative phenomena include increasing property differences, increasing crime. In addition, the lifestyle of city dwellers is changing and they spend more hours at work, while they celebrate their free time most often in urban spaces. These factors make common areas in cities more important. A visit to the gallery can be a time of silence and contemplation, necessary to maintain the harmony of the mind of a busy man of the future. And in the cosmopolitan world of many faiths, races and views, exhibition spaces will become one of the few places free from divisions, uniting all visitors (Kołpa, 2018). Currently, in the era of COVID-19, social isolation and fear of infection, the garden space is additionally beginning to gain value. Especially city dwellers locked up with their families in small apartments need external space, e.g. a place for walks. And for the gallery, the garden around the building may become an epidemically safe exhibition area.

The garden at Galeria Labirynt is an opportunity to publish a works of art and a place for a wide range of artistic activities. Art can connect many cultures and show different perspectives of globalization. Here, any form of expression and content can occur, and this space will be the blueprint for the artist’s absolute freedom. Moreover, access to the works will be free and universal. This is where the viewer will be able to enter into a dialogue with art. Such activities may contribute in the material and non-material spheres to the stimulation of the Wieniawa district and will positively impact the broadly understood activation of the city center.

2. METHODOLOGY

The research work was carried out in two ways – chamber work consisted of a query, analyzes, design works, and field research – a local inspection and dendrological inventory. During the on-site inspection, the existing condition and natural values of the area were assessed. The field research was carried out in 2019. The dendrological inventory consisted of measuring trees and shrubs in the field and mapping them for a geodetic base. The circumference of the tree trunks was measured at the height of 130 cm from the base of the trunk. A survey was also conducted in which 90 people participated.

3. THE SPACE AROUND PUBLIC FACILITIES

Public space is a place open to all citizens. The essence of such a place is the freedom to express views and various behaviors under the principles of social coexistence. The space next to public utility buildings should be well-ordered and planned. The organized events encourage people to join and participate in what others are doing (Dymnicka, 2009; 2013).

Due to the intensity of life, besides everyday worries: work, education, and raising children – modern people forget about the importance of maintaining old, existing contacts and establishing new, non-commercial ones, e.g., conversations with neighbors, walkers, seniors sitting next to the bench. New generations give an advantage to more important things, in their opinion: studies, careers, work. In this way, we lose this ‘life between buildings’, which is the primary source of information and inspiration. The inactivity of people in the space between buildings is the reason for the disappearance of contacts (Gehl, 2013).

Green areas in the city are a space that offers the possibility of being surrounded by other people, making new friends, participating in casual dialogues. As a result, a person becomes more positive towards other people and takes an active part in the life of society. Just being in the same area is not yet a meeting. There should be something to engage in joint action. A simple example is a playground for games at school or a playground in a housing estate. When they are together, children start to be interested in the play of others. They ‘interfere’ with the games of others. Therefore, equipping a playground or any other public space is crucial. It affects human life and behavior. An old Scandinavian saying says that “people come where people are” (Gehl, 2010: 23; 2013: 17).

Among the many functions of greenery in cities, the most important ones should be mentioned. The first is the ecological function, which includes gas exchange, i.e., the absorption of carbon dioxide by plants and oxygen production. Trees and shrubs serve as a filter that stops pollutants such as dust, dust, and gases. Greenery along the road infrastructure creates an acoustic barrier. The aesthetic function of greenery is enrichment and complements the city landscape. Vegetation complements and emphasizes the attractiveness of architectural

objects. Walks and games in the open-air help to soothe emotions and observe plants and animals (mostly insects) has an educational function (Czerwieniec, Lewińska, 2000). We cannot imagine a city without trees. They are the basis for shaping green spaces. We are used to their presence in parks, along streets, or around parking lots. Trees soothe and calm the formalism and coldness of concrete. Their shady crowns provide shelter on hot summer days. Older trees are even more important than new plantings. For many years they accompany the lives of different generations (Szczepanowska, 2001).

The high artistic level of works in harmony with the beauty of the greenery designed by man, as well as with the existing natural shape, can contribute to the creation of valuable public spaces, which are a place of recreation and a tourist attraction of the city. Sculptures compositional composition with vegetation have an intense visual impact – when viewed close up, from a distance and, for example, reflected in water (Makowska, 2012). Art created and exhibited outdoors is art always seen in contrast and in combination with nature. In this way, both the nature of art and the art of nature appear. The outdoor exhibition of works gives them a sacred meaning (Sobota, 2017).

4. THE GARDEN AS AN EXHIBITION SPACE

The attractive arrangement of the surroundings of museums and galleries not only improves the aesthetics and spatial order of the city but also places to relax. Surrounding art galleries should inspire you to create various installations, performances, and *street art*. In public greenery, sculpture can fulfill an artistic, didactic, educational function and sometimes has a sacred meaning. A special type of garden is sculpture gardens. Usually, several works made of durable materials are exhibited in a picturesque setting of plants and landscape. The sculpture garden can be private or owned by the museum and available for a fee, or it can be public and accessible to all (Dudkiewicz et al., 2016). The first sculpture gardens were created in the 1960s. The list of the most important sculpture gardens includes, for example, the park at the Kröller-Müller museum in the Netherlands, the sculpture composition in the courtyard of the Museum of Modern Art in New York, the garden at the Australian National Gallery in Parkes, the Park of Europe near Vilnius, the Rodin Museum in Paris (figs. 1–4), Perry Green with sculptures by Henry Moore or Barbara Hepworth Sculpture Garden.

In socialist Poland, undertakings such as sculpture collections in urban space were undertaken. In 1965, the 1st Biennial of Spatial Forms was held in Elbląg, and in 1974, the Wałbrzych Open-Air Sculpture Gallery was inaugurated with the open air in Książ. At the same time, sculpture and park complexes were established. From 1965, in the park and palace complex in Orońsko – once the property of the painter Józef Brandt – there was a work center for sculptors, which since 1981 has the status of a state institution under the name of the Center of Polish Sculpture. In the vicinity of Brandt's palace, sculptures from



Fig. 1. The Rodin Museum, 2018. Photo by M. Dudkiewicz



Fig. 2. „Three Shadows” (bronze, 1902-04), the fragment of „The Gate of Hell” – the triple vision of Adam banished from paradise, Rodin Museum, Paris 2018. Photo by M. Dudkiewicz



Fig. 3. „Hell’s Gate” with inferno scenes from the Divine Comedy at the Rodin Museum in Paris, 2018. Photo by M. Dudkiewicz



Fig. 4. The Rodin Sculpture Garden is located around the 18th-century Rococo Hotel Biron, 2018. Photo by M. Dudkiewicz

the museum's collection are on display. Since 1976, there has been a Gdańsk Contemporary Sculpture Gallery in the Oliwa Park, presenting part of the collection of the Contemporary Art Department of the National Museum in Gdańsk. The open-air sculpture collection in Poraj started to be created in 2009. Here, works from subsequent open-air locations change the park's space, enter into relations with the already existing ones, sometimes giving them new meanings (Kal, 2016).

Nowadays, ecological and *land art* are developing more and more. There are practically no limits to the materials from which an art installation can be made. Franciszek Strynkiewicz – a well-known Polish sculptor, claims that a sculptural material can be either a growing tree, soil, groups of plants, a fence, or a bench. All these elements can make one coherent composition and be a sufficient exhibit against the background of the garden. Landscape art becomes a decorative art, and not only an *avant-garde* activity (Rylke, Garyszewska, 2010; 2013).

Sculptural gardens are popularizing and developing now. They differ in size, materials used, theme, theme/story to convey. Both native and designed vegetation constitute such a garden are the background for art objects, and the garden's compositional arrangement is subordinated to the exhibition composition. An example of Polish artistic exhibition space is the Arboretum in Bolestraszyce. Here, space is decorated with wicker and wood sculptures (figs. 5–8).

The garden next to the gallery can be a green room and become a work of art. A garden can evoke different feelings, attract attention and stimulate the imagination. The neighborhood of galleries and museums can become an attractive place for recreation and sometimes in a non-binding way to get acquainted with art (Rylke, Gawryszewska, 2010).



Fig. 5. Wicker *Feniks* in the Arboretum in Bolestraszyce, 2018. Photo by M. Dudkiewicz



Fig. 6. Wicker narcissus flower in the Arboretum in Bolestraszyce, 2018. Photo by M. Dudkiewicz



Fig. 7. Wicker *Feelings*, 2018. Photo by M. Dudkiewicz



Fig. 8. A maze made of wicker, 2018. Photo by M. Dudkiewicz

All public places should be visible, have an easily detectable entrance and exit, be well-connected with the city, convenient to use, safe, clean, and comfortable – this is an opportunity for many visitors. Highlighting the character or aesthetics of the building with a garden will make a positive impression on the observer. Often, it is the surroundings of the building that influence our decision whether to go inside (Łuszczek, Ptańska, 2010).

5. CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PLACE

Galeria Labirynt is situated at the intersection of Popiełuszko and Poniatowski Streets in the Wieniawa District, in the center of Lublin. Originally, Wieniawa was a village belonging to the Lubomelski, Tarłów and Leszczyński families. From 1916 it was incorporated into the administrative area of the city of Lublin. It was characterized by mainly wooden buildings, with a brick synagogue and a municipal building. Wieniawa was inhabited mainly by poor Jewish craftsmen and traders. After 1940, the Nazis destroyed, among others a synagogue and 500 houses, as well as a Jewish cemetery existing since the 18th century. The Wieniawski market square and street layout have been irretrievably changed by newer buildings. Currently, there are mainly multi-family residential buildings with accompanying services on the ground floors. The buildings were constructed in prefabricated technology in the 1960s (Taracha, 2011, Rzeczowska, 2017).

The area covered by the study is approximately 8,000 m². The area is now a grassy square, and under the lawn layer, there are remains of asphalt pavement, stones, and aggregate from the former parking lot.

The building which currently houses the Gallery belonged to the St. Syroczyński Zespół Szkół Samochodowych. The school was founded at the beginning of the 20th century, and the building served as a car repair shop until the mid-1960s. Then the building and the area were taken over by the city, and in the years 2009–2013, there was a branch of the Cultural Center, now called Workshops of Culture at 5 Grodzka Street, while the Art Exhibitions Office was established in 1956. Since 2010, it is called 'Galeria Labirynt'. In 2012, Galeria Labirynt received permission from the Mayor of Lublin to rent a property at 5 Popiełuski St., and since then, it has been the Gallery's headquarters.

The elevation of Galeria Labirynt has a characteristic shape and color. The building has a narrow and long rectangular plan and has a semi-circular gable roof. The roof and façade are painted black, and inside, all the walls are pure white. It is a single-storey building. On the eastern façade of the building, there is a neon sign 'Kosmos', formerly hanging above the entrance to a famous Lublin cinema, which was demolished in 2012 (figs. 9, 10).

In the south-west part of the square there is an artistic installation made of the roots of cut trees. It is a project of visual artist Joanna Rajkowska called I will not enter your heaven. It was realized in 2017 as a sign of the cutting down of millions of trees in Poland (fig. 11). Another artistic object is a felled tree, which is part of the city's history and the memory of many generations – the Lublin Baobab. It was a black poplar from around 1880, which grew on Litewski Square until 2017. It was removed as a result of the progressive dieback



Fig. 9. Gallery from the east side, 2019. Photo by U. Havryliv



Fig. 10. Square in front of the Galeria Labirynt, 2019. Photo by U. Havryliv

process, despite many attempts to save this specimen. The tree trunk was intended for the performance of a sculpture by the artist Mirosław Bałka on the occasion of the 700th anniversary of the city of Lublin. Unfortunately, the idea was not implemented, because in June 2018 the trunk was set on fire (fig. 12).

The gallery building is located in the northern part of the plot. The area is irregularly planted with large trees. The most common species are warty birches (10), black locusts (7), Norway maples (7), common ash (4), and white poplars (4). One specimen of the ash-leaf maple, silver fir, white mulberry, walnut, acetic sumac, black cherry, and domestic plum was also inventoried (fig. 13). The area is unfenced, and the only curtain from Poniatowski Street is a hedge about 1 m high, made of two varieties of *calinoliiformes*: 'Luteus' and 'Purpureus'. The overall health of the plants was good. Some trees require care. The plot borders with self-seeding trees and shrubs (maples, ash trees, black robins) growing on a steep slope from the north.

A social research (survey available on Facebook) was carried out, in which 90 people took part, including art students or gallery employees. In this way, each resident of Lublin could anonymously answer questions related to the development of the area at the Gallery.

Ok. 80% of respondents believe that the area is not very attractive to plant and the number of trees, shrubs, and flowering plants is too small. The users of the area rate the noise nuisance level and the nearby street as medium (3/5). The Gallery employees want the area to be more adapted to the specificity of the gallery and fulfill a recreational and



Fig. 11. The installation *I will not enter your heaven* by Joanna Rajkowska, 2019.
Photo by U. Havryliv



Fig. 12. Remains of Lublin Baobab, 2019. Photo by U. Havryliv

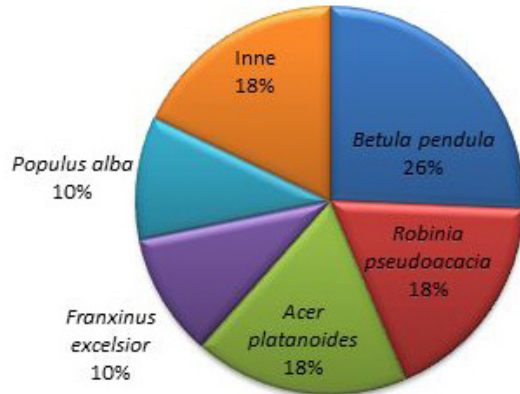


Fig. 13. List of tree species in the area around Galeria Labirynt in Lublin, 2018.
Created by M. Dudkiewicz

exhibition function. 92% of people believe that the area should be used for recreation and rest. The interviews and surveys show that most Lublin residents using the area expect that the area around the Gallery will become a place for meetings and rest, sheltered from a busy street, and will present and promote contemporary art. The additional question for the employees of the Gallery shows that they would like the area to be more adapted to the specifics of an artistic institution and to fulfill a recreational and exhibition function.

6. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The design concept was created based on the dendrological inventory, analysis of the existing state, and user needs research. The surroundings of the gallery should be a representative place with the possibility of organizing temporary sculptural exhibitions and artistic installations outdoors. Besides, it should have a recreational and recreational function, encourage visitors and attract attention. The new design assumption should provide an intimate atmosphere and a sense of security. Also, the area should be plastic and functional so that it can be adapted to the needs of the events. A new communication system, elements of small architecture, and illumination were designed. Besides, the right choice of plantings will ensure the attractiveness of urban space in all seasons. Both existing and newly designed vegetation will isolate the space from the busy street, and it will protect from noise, act as a fence, and give privacy and a certain intimacy to the garden. It will be an



Fig. 14. Design of the surroundings of Galeria Labirynt – view from above, 2019.
Created by U. Havryliv

ideal place for meetings, walks, and rest. Thanks to the new form and modern elements of equipment, the facility will become recognizable in Lublin.

It is divided into an exhibition and a lounge area (figs. 14–17). The concept encourages visitors to explore and learn about modern art. The project proposes surfaces made of concrete slabs in front of the building entrance and a mineral pavement on labyrinthine alleys. In the middle of the area, a square designed for sculpture is planned. Helped by a rebate of tall species of grass, quiet nooks were created. Plane trees were planted along the main aisle, and temporary art installations were provided. Modular benches made of concrete and wood were designed. The benches are stable and need not be attached to the ground; vegetation can be moved. A pergola has also been designed, which will serve as a screen supply for evening film screenings in the summer cinema. The films can be watched while sitting on free-standing deckchairs, poufs, pillows, and blankets on the lawn.



Fig. 15. Visualization – view of the square in front of Galeria Labirynt, 2019. Created by U. Havryliv



Fig. 16. Visualization – a view of the recreational part of the square in front of Galeria Labirynt, 2019. Created by U. Havryliv



Fig. 17. Visualization – a place for temporary exhibitions of art installations, 2019.
Created by U. Havryliv

Another object by the gallery will be an information board on the main alley. It consists of twelve tables placed horizontally in four rows; each is 100 × 70 cm. Such a board will display announcements about events in the gallery and help organize cyclical exhibitions of posters, paintings, and graphic designs. You can manually rotate individual boards. Supplementing the existing vegetation will be a curtain from the busy Poniatowski Street. It will protect from noise, act as a fence and provide privacy. The place will be perfect for meetings, walks, and rest.

7. SUMMARY

The design of the Gallery's surroundings was to make the facility recognizable and friendly. As a site next to a cultural institution, it will attract representatives of different generations, interests, and views with its openness. The project attempts to create high-quality public space through a new functional and spatial offer with art elements. Sculptural elements will accentuate the viewing axes here, awaken the imagination, and combined with the natural beauty of the garden and thanks to changes in scenery, they will acquire a different expression at each season of the year. The concept assumes that space will positively influence Lublin's cultural and social development and improve relationships between people. The project aims to fill the space with good energy – to be an attraction for all residents of the Wieniawa district, Gallery employees, artists, and passers-by.

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