

LODZ

CREATES INNOVATION

NEWS MAGAZINE OF THE CITY OF LODZ

NO. 1 (6)/2015

A CITY TO LIVE IN

JAPANESE FLAIR

NEW CENTRE OF LODZ

RESOURCEFUL DESIGN

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ANNA KRAWCZYK,
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Piotrkowska Street in Lodz is one of the best known places in Poland and presently it is undergoing a major overhaul. The revitalization programme aims at returning the city centre back to its entertainment and cultural function, changing it into a place where you want to spend your free time and, ultimately, a place where people work and live. We have been joined in a debate on revitalization and its challenges by Marcin Obijalski, who heads the Office of Revitalization and City Development Planning, Hanna Gill-Piątek, responsible for social concerns in the same office, Bartosz Poniatowski, who coordinates a team designated to manage Piotrkowska Street and the inner city in the Office of the City's Architect and Bartosz Walczak, PhD – lecturer and former conservation officer. Satisfying the needs of inhabitants is a crucial factor in the development of the city. Currently, the inhabitants of Lodz are taking part in the surveys where they can express their opinion as well as say what they expect and what their needs are. The multicultural heritage of Lodz, with its architecture and urban design from the turn of the 20th century, is worth preserving. This attitude is manifested in the way CHP plant EC1 is being revitalized and the railway station in Lodz Fabryczna converted. The building site of the New Centre of Lodz covers the area of more than 100 ha, it is situated in the very heart of the city and is a venture unique in Europe.

Another unique event is Lodz Design Festival taking place in autumn. Can we already speak of the Lodz school of design? What is it that attracts world famous designers to this festival? These questions are answered by Michał Piernikowski, the festival's Director. He believes that many exciting initiatives start at the grass roots. Designers in Lodz, e.g. have the ability to manage on their own and can solve current problems in an innovative, creative and ingenious way.

We can also see this in social cooperatives in Lodz. They attract people who are sensitive to the needs of the community and offer them jobs.

Finally, we discuss creativity visible to the naked eye, and more specifically – murals. The number of tourists who want to come and admire them grows annually. Urban Forms Foundation harnessed street art to give Lodz an artistic and original feel. Have they succeeded? Decide for yourself. Come and visit Lodz!

Photo: Paweł Lawreszuk

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REGIONAL PROGRAMME
NATIONAL COHESION STRATEGY



EUROPEAN UNION
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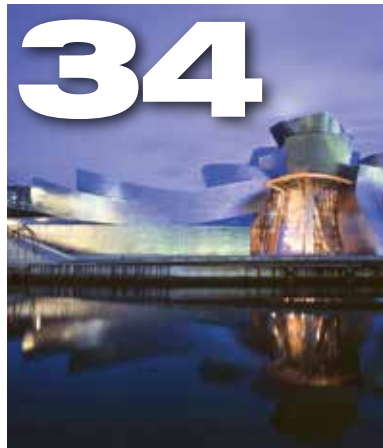


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A city to live in

Our reporters, Anna Krawczyk and Jarosław Zaradkiewicz, discuss revitalization and its challenges with Marcin Obijalski, who heads the Office of Revitalization and City Development Planning, Hanna Gill-Piątek, responsible social concerns in the same office, Bartosz Poniatowski, who coordinates a team designated to manage Piotrkowska Street and the inner city in the Office of the City's Architect and Bartosz Walczak, PhD – lecturer and former conservation officer.

Marcin Obijalski: Today, the centre doesn't play the role it normally would in a city developing in a balanced way. It should be the centre of entertainment, free time- and cultural activities, work and also a place to live.

How to bring the city to its former glory?

Marcin Obijalski: It is part of a broader subject of how buildings in the city can influence the way it functions, how it is perceived by the inhabitants and whether they identify themselves with their city. A considerable number of the inhabitants of Lodz live in blocks of flats outside the city (that is if we call the historic city centre the city itself since this place is actually Lodz's heritage site). It is crucial to assess to what extent people use the central part of Lodz and how much they identify themselves with it.

Today, the centre doesn't play the role it normally would in a city developing in a balanced way. It should be the centre of entertainment, free time and cultural activities, work and also a place to live. Living and working closer to the centre and concentrating cultural events there is significant because it saves time and money. It also makes a positive impact on city management because a compact city is more cost-effective. Proper urban reworking goes beyond renovation. One must first make an order in the city space and later plan a number of actions to enliven it. The inhabitants must be convinced that the city centre is worth their time.

Shabby buildings are the first thing everyone sees in their city and reason enough to perceive the place as derelict and unattractive, as a space that discourages from spending free time there and from living. This is one of the major points in the revitalization that we plan. We want to build the inhabitants' identity so that we share a common understanding of what our city means to us.

Hanna Gill-Piątek: Lodz's city centre can be described in two ways. First of all, it is in deep crisis and secondly, being situated around Piotrkowska Street, it has the highest potential. Thinking about urban redevelopment as a major refurbishment of town houses, railways or cemeteries is an outdated idea. Looking at it globally, it is in fact a process leading to a comprehensive change, prevailing in such areas as infrastructure, economy and social aspects. The process involves many players. The city, being the strongest of them, starts it and seeks partners (also in the community) to make the most of the initiative. Reworking the city leads to the improvement in the lives of the local inhabitants. The first challenge we



should strive to solve is tackling real-life problems that we face. We want people already inhabiting the city centre to benefit from the renovation but we also hope to attract those who live in blocks of flats. What we strive to build here is a safe and visually attractive neighbourhood enticing with its atmosphere. Creating a common space and solving profound social problems are among our biggest challenges.

It is crucial that the inhabitants have an input in defining the aims of revitalization and what precisely is to undergo a major overhaul. We ask them about their needs, expectations and what exactly they want. The first consultation stage, attended by more than 500 people, is over now. People contributed 2.5 thousand suggestions, observations and proposals. The consultation process will continue this year. But we go beyond that. Those who don't come to consultation meetings will have a chance to obtain information about this initiative from special stands set up in backyards of their buildings. The Local Revitalization Programme will surely be thoroughly consulted.

Bartosz Poniatowski: One of the most frequent problems mentioned is lack of job opportunities and a changing economic situation. Therefore, actions we undertake inside communities must strongly focus on economic growth, local businesses and employing people to work in revitalization projects.



Hanna Gill-Piątek: Revitalization involves many players. The city, being the strongest of them, starts it and seeks partners (also in the community) to make the most of the initiative. Reworking the city leads to the improvement in the lives of the local inhabitants.

We need to remember that the things we are discussing are set in a cultural context. During one of the meetings with the inhabitants, somebody rightly observed that we cannot say the city centre is not aesthetic because aesthetics is a product of culture. We can say, though, that it is neglected. Using the term 'neglect' is essential for improving the image of the centre of Lodz. The Office of the City's Architect treats developing the centre of Lodz as a priority. It means a rebirth and reurbanisation which take into account this place's heritage – the architecture and urban design created at the turn of the 20th century. The majority of the inhabitants live outside the inner city whereas inside it, one fifth. The place constitutes a twentieth part of the whole Lodz and is very densely populated. The inner city of Lodz is the largest such in Poland and it is on this historic centre that the potential of Lodz is founded. However, the place should not become like an exhibit in a museum but rather be a vibrant place conscious of its heritage. In this aspect, it would reflect the development pattern of other cities with large 19th century centres.

We want the inhabitants to be able to live normally here and to become proud of this place too. We hope to transform the inner city into a regular centre, which would at the same time draw attention to the cultural jewels left by former generations. Once,

during one of our discussions, we concluded that instead of saying that Lodz is creative, we should rather say it is a city for creative people who have an opportunity to create against the backdrop of the rich 19th century architecture.

Bartosz Walczak: Generally, conservation officers associate revitalization with a renovation, frequently carried out for the sake of obtaining funds from EU programmes. I believe that essentially the tendency in the field of conservation corresponds to that of revitalization. In the 1970s, a modern definition of heritage started to take shape. How does it differ from historic monument? Heritage is defined as something that the society believes worthy of protection and wants to protect. Historic monument, on the other hand, is defined by experts as worth protecting. It is crucial that people associate historic monuments with heritage.

Monuments must be meaningful to contemporary society, e.g. people should need them, in some way, or think of them as useful. An outstanding example in question is Manufaktura. When it opened its doors, the inhabitants of Lodz concluded that post-industrial property is really attractive, that factories, which now have new functions, can be interesting. Earlier, many people were sceptical about it. Only after they had been shown that such a factory could serve as a shop, restaurant or museum did they notice that you could spend there a lot of time in an attractive way. The same approach can be applied to other regions in the city. Central districts will, naturally, have more objects presenting cultural value. It doesn't necessarily mean these have to be the oldest buildings – we boast one of the youngest monuments in Poland, i.e. Teatr Wielki.

To revitalise without conserving is possible only in the already mentioned blocks of flats. In any other case, these two overlap. Being sensitive fields, they need to be managed. It is a continuous, never-ending process.

Redefining creativity...

Bartosz Poniowski: Creative people can change the image of places they become involved with. Lodz is not the first to discover that. The same effect happened in Soho, New York where it was cheap



Bartosz Poniatowski: Developing the centre of Lodz is a priority. It means a rebirth and reurbanisation which take into account this place's heritage – the architecture and urban design created at the turn of the 20th century. It is on this historic centre that the potential of Lodz is founded. However, the place should not become like an exhibit in a museum but rather be a vibrant place conscious of its heritage.

and dirty at first. People who could rent properties, studios and lofts almost for nothing would come and pursue their artistic activities there. The process of gentrification started and the neighbourhood became fashionable. Rents began to rise, artists could no longer afford them, but the image of the place was such that people started to buy apartments there. In effect, the prices skyrocketed and the old inhabitants and the artists who brought life to the place had to move. We don't want to repeat that in Lodz. Therefore the brand 'Lodz creates' is undergoing a change.

Marcin Obijalski: It is a question of redefining the word 'creativity'. What does it mean? Presently, we highlight Lodz as a city attractive for creative people, i.e. people with initiative and interesting ideas, not necessarily artistic or visual. A young person returning from overseas who wants to fulfil some idea shows the kind of creativity we expect and is somebody for whom we want to create a space in Lodz. We want Lodz and its centre to be perceived as an attractive place for creative people (understood in its broad sense). We don't want to exclude anyone; quite the opposite, we wish to create an egalitarian city centre. Actually, we hope that the revitalization process will make all inhabitants feel great in their city as a whole, not just the centre. Lodz currently is not among top cities in terms of

economic development because we are catching up with other large cities after several years of decline. But we can turn it into our strength. Lodz still has an undiscovered yet intriguing space with heritage as an additional boon. The best example in question is OFF Piotrkowska. An austere factory turned out to be a good hatching place for creativity.

Hanna Gill-Piątek: Creativity means all kinds of activities that can be translated into money. Even though Lodz fell behind in some aspects, we are in a way privileged – we can avoid the mistakes of others. Lodz is big enough for people who constitute the so-called first wave of creativity – people involved in some artistic activities. We will have enough space for them for years to come. The second wave are cafés which are meeting points to hold discussions and boutiques selling craft- and artworks. They bring a lot of life to the city. If we take care to provide them with space, they will stay.

What mistakes should we avoid?

Bartosz Poniatowski: Lodz is most experienced in dealing with projects that do not involve people, namely renovations. If we are talking about 19th century structures, we face restrictions as to construction, fire safety, etc. imposed by building regulations. Exceptions are possible, but there are few architects, investors and construction engineers who want to go into all the trouble to obtain relevant permissions. Frequently, when historic buildings are converted, existing ceilings are substituted by reinforced concrete. This makes the project more expensive and harms the building because the weight is distributed differently in the building. The fact that we so easily discard the materials we find on site shows the lack of respect for our heritage. Instead of reinforcing joists or disposing of rotten material, we make a whole new ceiling. This makes the process more complicated, costly and harmful. Frequently, this is the result of an evaluation by experts who start with false assumptions and are not interested in reasonable preservation of existing structures.

Bartosz Walczak: The same is true when we look at how buildings are insulated with polystyrene foam. Nowadays we make buildings as tight as possible, but



Bartosz Walczak: I want Lodz to remain the city of chimneys and factory towers because they constitute our local heritage. It is a distinguishing feature of our architecture and urban design. There is no conflict of interests, in my opinion, between development, revitalization and preserving objects that decide about the character of the city.

until the early 20th century it was taken for granted that a wall might become damp under certain conditions and therefore it must be designed so that it can let the moisture quickly out. If insulation means making a sort of a vacuum flask out of a building, the moisture, which has to escape in some way, will cause wet rot.

Whether it is a simple renovation or urban redevelopment of the whole areas in a city, we should avoid routine. Listening to the needs of the inhabitants and a solid understanding of local context are safeguards against mistakes.

Marcin Obijalski: We want to avoid some consequences that gentrification may bring: changing the profile of people at whom the project is targeted and making the inhabitants stay in the revitalised space. In the project titled Mia100kamienic (the city of hundreds of townhouses), we successfully implemented the idea that the inhabitants can change their apartment, but they can move only from a town house that is in need of renovation to a town house that has already been renovated. Generally, we want the majority of the inhabitants to stay in the centre. We are aware that we cannot create an ideal city because no one has achieved that yet. There will always be areas that are shunned more than others. What we want to do is smooth the differences.

Lodz of the 21st century is...

Hanna Gill-Piątek: It is a strong and independent city developing from inside, a city we like and which we are all proud of; a city with enough space for everyone.

Marcin Obijalski: It is a city which relies on its inhabitants' potential and very small businesses (they proved to be the most stable workplaces). It is a city open to creativity, which we should understand in broad terms. Ultimately, there will be logistics centres established around Lodz because the city will make use of its geographical situation. This should, however, be treated as a sort of buffer zone which will generate income and help develop the city, but will not be the foundation on which the whole city functions. Lodz should be the kind of place which can function even if investors decide to leave because it relies on the inhabitants' potential. It should be a healthy, nearly self-sufficient organism.

Bartosz Walczak: I want Lodz to remain the city of chimneys and factory towers because they constitute our local heritage. It is a distinguishing feature of our architecture and urban design. There is no conflict of interests, in my opinion, between development, revitalization and preserving objects that decide about the character of the city. Since we don't have an old town dating back to Middle Ages, these factories function as castles (like, e.g. Wawel) in cities boasting such old history; they define the unique character of Lodz.

The greatest challenge right now is housing in the city centre. I see Lodz as a small city comfortable to live in and not a self-important metropolis. We should bear in mind that in fifty years time, according to some worrying demographic forecasts, Lodz will have as many inhabitants as before the First World War.

Bartosz Poniatowski: Demographic forecasts don't take into account that a trend may be changed. What we are observing right now is just that. We see Lodz as a city which makes a reasonable use of its resources, a city which invests, lives and makes use of its urban spaces. If something had been going on in a given place in the past, we don't let it alone. We make use of what we may, convert it so that it can address new needs and serve again the changing society and city. And all these activities happen against the backdrop of unique cultural heritage of Lodz.

Photo: Pawel Lawreszuk

BY JACEK BRYLSKI

Designing a space



The job fair

Young people interested in studying architecture or urban design in Lodz can choose between Lodz University of Technology and two private schools. However, only Lodz University of Technology offers both undergraduate and graduate studies.

Studying architecture and urban design, you will learn how to design the architecture of buildings and urban space. You will be ready to shape the space which frames the lives of people.

A FACULTY WITH HISTORY

Established in 1956, the Faculty of Civil Engineering, Architecture and Environmental Engineering of Lodz University of Technology is the oldest one in Lodz to educate architects-to-be. Today it occupies two buildings in aleja Politechniki 6. When the buildings were built in the 60s, they were situated at the fringes of the university campus. Presently, surrounded by beautiful scenery, they are almost the heart of the campus. About 500 students start their education in the two institutes and six departments of the faculty every year. It has been educating young civil engineers, architects, urban designers and environmental engineers for years. A newcomer to the faculty is Land Management, which started off in 2010 and already offers undergraduate, graduate and doctoral studies.

All the faculties, regardless of the type of studies you are enrolled in, use the ECTS system for assessment purposes, which opens the studies up to international cooperation. The faculty offers its students a chance to take part in a student exchange programme with over 30 universities from Europe, North America and Asia. Thanks to the Socrates/Erasmus programme, more than 60 students and around 20 members of staff are hosted by foreign universities each year.

The faculty boasts two accredited research laboratories: Laboratory of Building Physics and Building Materials and Laboratory of Building Materials and Structures.

PRIVATE ENGINEERS

Apart from the University of Technology, the title of an engineer is granted by the Higher School of Art and Design and the University of Social Sciences.

The former was established in 1998. The Faculty of Architecture encompasses the Department of Architecture and Urban Design and the Department of Interior Design.

The teaching programme is tailored to answer the needs of the multifaceted character of architects' work. It provides both cross-curricular and specialist knowledge preparing the students to work as architects.

Undergraduate studies are four years long and end in the title of an engineer. The students learn to design: detached and multi-family houses, buildings for the services sector, public buildings and buildings for special purposes, housing estates, whole districts and public spaces. Moreover, during the studies you will learn how to revitalise urban spaces and architectural structures.

At the University of Social Sciences, on the other hand, you can study: architecture and interior design, architecture and landscaping, urban design and land development planning. The programme includes such topics as the history and theory of architecture, urban design, the arts, legal regulations relevant for the building sector, the economics and organization of an investment and planning process. The University draws particular attention to teaching computer programmes relevant for architects and to educating its students to be able to create and develop culture.

Both institutions provide only undergraduate studies ending in the title of an engineer.

Photo: Paweł Lawreszuk

BY JAROSŁAW ZARADKIEWICZ

Convert an idea into business

Innovation Center – High-Technology Accelerator University of Lodz Foundation and the StartMoney seed fund have many years of experience in the evaluation of business ideas and the development of innovative businesses.

The University of Lodz has been running its Business Incubator for ten years. It provides business development consultancy, expert advisory services and trainings both for companies and individual entrepreneurs. During the assessment of innovation and market potential, it uses, among others, the methods applied at the University of Texas and NASA. For its clients, the Incubator also provides access to experts from various fields of science and industry, as well as business contacts in Europe and the USA. From over 50 companies that participated in the Incubator program and have benefited from this form of assistance, most graduates have succeeded and are doing well on the market.

A FRIENDLY PLACE

University of Lodz Incubator is a place that offers business and technology consultancy and organizational support. It helps to lead innovative projects through the early, critical stages of development, obtain necessary financial resources and introduce ideas to the market.

Most companies that have their origin in the Incubator successfully operate on the market. The example could be Listonic company. In 2009, when the idea for the business was born, Listonic founders were the final year students at the Lodz universities. They came up with a prototype of mobile application, created as part of their master thesis.



Office space in the Business Incubator of the University of Lodz

With their application, they were among the winners of the contest for an innovative idea organised in 2009 by the Incubator, whose managers, seeing the potential of the business, attracted cooperating financial investor to invest in the idea. It resulted in a few million investment and the foundation of the company. Today, the company's main product is a very popular application for smartphones – modern electronic shopping list that can be shared among several people and updated at any time. The company left the Incubator in 2013, and now is also successfully entering international markets.

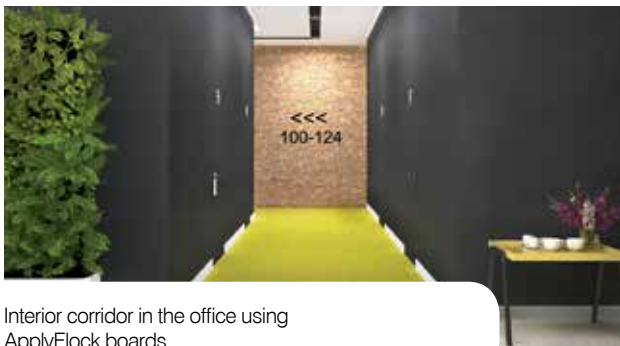
Among the graduates of the University of Lodz Incubator, there are other companies founded by University of Lodz students and graduates. Among them are iTur.pl company, running popular tourist and accommodation portals, or eWitryna.pl – company producing websites and delivering marketing services, which currently has customers almost all over the world, including China and the USA. Among the Incubator participants there are also companies founded by University scientists, such as NPIN, which offers technologically advanced nanoparticles and nanomaterials.

HOW CAN WE HELP YOU?

The University Incubator offers its services to everyone with an idea for a business, including novice entrepreneurs. They do not need to be affiliated with Lodz universities. However, students and researchers from Lodz are the biggest group of Incubator beneficiaries.

It is strongly stressed in the Incubator, that the advisory services, help in business development and, by providing the information needed lets fulfill fundamental needs of young entrepreneurs and innovators.

After becoming familiar with a given project, employees of the Incubator help to assess whether the idea has a chance of success in the market, and to write the business plan. They also help choose an appropriate legal form of business, develop the strategy, and create a business model that will generate income. Moreover, the Incubator provides support in obtaining patent or other kind of protection for the business idea, helps find partners and contractors, and establish contacts with University of Lodz scientists, as well



Interior corridor in the office using ApplyFlock boards



The stand of Business Incubator of UL and StartMoney fund on the forum of 'Grow Up Start Up' environment

as promote business through its own channels. Business advice can also be offered to the companies from outside the Incubator, on commercial basis.

In the Incubator facilities, office space can be leased on favourable terms, backed with administrative support. Entrepreneurs can also choose to participate in tenant or virtual Incubator program. In both cases, there is access to business consulting and conference rooms.

The Incubator also provides training sessions and workshops on how to run a business, including development of business model, creation of a business plan, effective promotion, financing of new companies, business communication, self-presentation, negotiations and other topics.

WHERE DOES THE MONEY COME FROM?

One of the main needs of new entrepreneurs – company founders, inventors and start-ups are the financial resources. The money is needed for design and research, prototyping, testing and protection of intellectual property (e.g. patent application).

The Incubator helps to secure financing at an early stage, from the University of Lodz StartMoney seed fund, managed by the Accelerator, or from other seed funds, venture capital funds and cooperating business angels. The employees of the Incubator offer support in obtaining financing from EU and national support programs, as well as guarantee and loan funds. They help choose the right calls and prepare a grant application, including Horizon 2020, national and regional programs, and the initiatives of Polish Agency for Entrepreneurship Development, or National Center for Research and Development.

STARTMONEY FUND

The capital of StartMoney seed fund comes from the EU programme. Financing is both for aspiring entrepreneurs with just a business idea, or those already running a company. What is important for them, is the fact that StartMoney offers not only the financing, but also supports the businesses with experience, contacts, promotion and assistance in obtaining additional funding for the next stage of development.

In exchange for funding, StartMoney takes shares in the business – in the company founded together with the entrepreneur. After a period of time, the fund will want to sell its shares at a profit. This time and other conditions of cooperation are established with the entrepreneurs in the investment agreement.

Over 2.5 years StartMoney fund has invested in 11 businesses, with the financing ranging from 300 thousand to nearly 800 thousand PLN. The investments include several information technology projects, also computer game production, and solutions in biotechnology and medicine. Among StartMoney firms, there is also ApplyFlock company producing innovative interior furnishings – new skirting boards covered by so called flock, i.e. soft finish similar to carpeting. The fund also financed the start of Lodz base company Cellvet. Cellvet applies results of research on stem cells in the treatment of animals, and specializes in animal genetic diagnostics. The fund also supported SmartMobile company, which is implementing speech recognition and speech-to-text conversion technology and applications for mobile devices. For example, a doctor can feed a description of the X-ray images into the computer without the keyboard – just using speech, or a court hearing may be automatically saved in form of a protocol without writing it down. Thanks to SmartMobile, applications and tools can become much simpler and more natural.

Contact

From October 2014, the UL Incubator, Technology Accelerator and StartMoney fund are located in the city center, on the campus of the University of Lodz, Kopcińskiego 16/18 Street, in the University of Lodz Conference Center on the tenth floor.
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BY JAROSŁAW ZARADKIEWICZ

Japanese flair

Having the family finances at heart, Mateusz Stolarski started to work off and on while still studying. – I decided that it was time to take things in my own hands since it was not easy for my parents to support me. I took every commission from my older colleagues (architects) – he recalls the beginnings. At last, he started to work on his own projects.

Such were the beginnings of one of the leading design studios in Lodz – Tamizo.

At first, he tried to cooperate with his fellow students, but it just didn't work out. He became independent. At the same time, he started to collaborate with Aleksandra Zdziechowska – a friend from university – to develop the company. The name of the studio was coined from their nicknames. If you read Tamizo from the end to the beginning, you will come up with 'ozi' and 'mat' – this is how their friends called them at university. – Tamizo is also a Japanese name, and we liked Japanese architecture very much already then – adds the owner.

PIONEERS

Mateusz Stolarski invented the name, bought a domain and created the company's first Internet site. In the

beginning of the new millennium, such things were not taken for granted as they are today. The couple started to participate in competitions, receive small commissions, work on interior designs and first houses. They kept on honing their skills to make the next project better than the previous one.

– I didn't pay that much attention during my studies. I didn't like the designs that got the best grades, so it didn't bother me when my work got a worse grade. What mattered was that I liked it – he remembers. The university appreciated his work after his thesis examination and after he had received two prizes in a national competition for the best graduation project of the year. He was also nominated for the best student of the year at Lodz University of Technology.

He says he owes much of his career's development to his parents. – I studied architecture thanks to them. Also thanks to them, I didn't have to worry, when I began, about a place to live. The way they brought me up and the values I inherited from my family home led me to the place I am in right now. The rest is due to hard work and a number of sleepless nights – explains Tamizo's owner.

FIRST SUCCESSES

It all began when Stolarski's graduation project was noticed. First awards and magazine articles followed and started to slowly expand the portfolio, which became recognizable.

– When I finished my studies, I didn't have to think what next. I didn't have to search for a job because the brand which had been built over a couple of years, became recognizable; we had clients – says Mateusz Stolarski.

This was also the time when the founders of Tamizo decided to get more experience and became engaged in a major technical design process for one of Lodz-based studios. But clients kept on phoning them and it was impossible to marry the development of the company with working for somebody else. The couple decided to abandon the latter and focus on their own business instead. In 2006 Tamizo appeared officially as a registered business on the market. Six years later, the original founders decided to part ways. Presently, Mateusz Stolarski works in a team of four and emphasizes time and again its importance. He always uses the term 'we' when talking about his company.

Stolarski underlines that they are an innovative team. – Firstly, the term 'innovative' refers to the way they think about designs and designing. Watching other architects work, I get the impression that there are only a few who work like we do. Our team continuously investigates the relation between form and function in each and every element of the project – Tamizo's owner tells us. Years of experience and numbers of challenges they had to face led them to develop a methodology of designing that has been tested in battle. It is based on constant assessment of the relation between form and function. When thinking about a building, they evaluate the influence that a change of function will have on it... and the other way around.

– Secondly, I think that the technology we use makes us also innovative. We try to be up-to-date with latest technological solutions – he adds.

The owner emphasizes that since the beginning, he has been working on computer programmes that provide documentation based on 3D models of buildings. He knows all the ins and outs of BIM Technology, which is still a newbie on the Polish market, but will eventually become indispensable. Moreover, he tries to be up-to-date with latest developments in visualisation techniques – his



hobby since he was a student. In the nearby future, he intends to introduce 3D printing.

A GLOBAL OFFER

Stolarski considers the team's coherent portfolio the company's greatest achievement. It sends a strong and clear message as to what a client can expect from their designs. They champion minimalism. – In the designing process, we value honesty and simplicity the most. We know that simplicity at its best requires perfection. That's why when the team is designing, special attention is drawn to the role of details and well chosen materials. We believe that the most natural ones are very powerful: stone, concrete, wood and glass. Their unique character defines the whole space, they cannot be pigeonholed, and also they age very well – says Mateusz Stolarski.

He quotes the iconic aphorisms of Ludwig Mies van der Rohe 'Less is more' and Leonardo da Vinci 'Simplicity is the ultimate sophistication' as his company's motto.

The team members deal mainly with architecture and interior design. They are also interested in industrial design, graphics and urban design. They address their offer to people conscious of their needs, searching for original solutions tailored exactly for them, people who value sophisticated simplicity.

They design both for individual clients as well as companies and institutions. They have designed dozens of detached houses and apartment interiors. But they also did much larger projects, such as the latest one: office buildings designed for KGHM.

Since the very beginning, they have been extending their range of activity outside Lodz and the region. They work on projects across Poland. Lately, they have started to receive commissions from foreign clients. They have designed a housing development in Georgia recently and are currently working on a design of an area of detached houses in Estonia. They are also negotiating projects in Germany and Norway.

BY JAROSŁAW ŻARADKIEWICZ

The Story of a Swing



MOOMOO Architects Office

MOOMOO Architects Office is not just two frontmen and founders of the company, but also a team of people with whom they work and meet every day. The office consists of a permanent team of designers and a group of foreign interns who participate in a several month internship. – As Lodz is so different from the nearby Warsaw, interns often choose internship in our office. They gain work experience here, which makes us, the native inhabitants of Lodz, feel well – Jakub Majewski and Łukasz Pastuszka, the owners of the office, say.

Majewski and Pastuszka founded their office during their studies. During the day, they combined the duties at the university and part-time job. At night, they created their own joint brand design. – We were aware that we would spend a large part of our lives at work. For this reason, we were eager to create the office we would visit with fascination and a smile – Łukasz Pastuszka explains.

They assumed that they were anchored in Lodz from the outset. They initially chose a small place for their office behind Max Schroeder's former wool product factory, when no one had seen the potential in the post-industrial buildings. From the very beginning... a swing hung in the window. – It is still an important tool for us to work. When we design, we often create something new – the formula no one has used before. The awakening of a child element in us helps us to look from a different perspective and solve the problem. We wish everyone could have fun in the period between numerous responsible activities on a work day – the co-owner of the company says.

For the owners, it is important not only that they are invited to participate in prestigious projects. They also appreciate where and with whom they work. Owing to their innovative approach to work since the outset, they were able to win several awards at major competitions, among others, for the House of the Year 2008 D&W project, the arrangement of more than 200 Vobis showrooms and changing the image of ING bank.

In 2009, the prestigious industry magazine 'Wallpaper' placed MOOMOO on the list of 30 best young offices in the world. The proposals for cooperation have come from the whole world over. Now, they design mainly in Warsaw, Poznan and Wroclaw, as well as in Saudi Arabia, Reykjavik and Bratislava. In Arabic Jeddah, they have designed the complex of 34 residential buildings, whose construction has been going on for a year.

For the MOOMOO team, designing is not only strictly architecture and buildings. They also work on individual designs of interiors, exhibitions and events. Now, they are working on a new brand name, creating a network-wide design rebranding of showrooms for Poland, Germany and Russia. It is the fourth international company in their design portfolio (Vobis, Atlantic, Speak Up and Solar).

The project currently being completed is significant for architects because it is located in Lodz. For the Israeli developer, they designed a food market in an entirely new look, in an adapted post-industrial building. The office is also involved in various actions promoting architecture. In December 2014, when Ogawa (famous Japanese architect designing, among others, for Calvin Klein) visited their office in Lodz, they organised a lecture for the students of Lodz University of Technology, attended by Shinichi Ogawa. During the upcoming visit of Ogawa, they will provide him with local design support for the Polish market. Sometimes, they organise architectural tours around different buildings, e.g. Double Tree hotel in order to show students architectural solutions from the inside.

Photo: Paweł Lawreszuk

New Centre of Lodz

More than 100 ha located in the heart of Lodz is undergoing revitalization. This unique urban operation at European scale is a great challenge for the city. Revitalization of EC1 power plant and reconstruction of Lodz Fabryczna railway station will cost more than 2 billion zlotys. Lodz budget will spend not more than 600 million. The rest of the money comes from the EU funds.

The programme New Centre of Lodz has been implemented since 2007. Two flagship investments include revitalization of the old EC1 heat and power plant and a complex reconstruction of Lodz Fabryczna railway station and its surroundings.

The aim of the programme is to create a new urban space with a historical centre based on the axis of Piotrkowska Street. As part of the programme, post-industrial and railway areas are developed and unique urban fabric from the late nineteenth and early twentieth century is used in a creative way.

EC1 CULTURALLY

14 years ago, the oldest Lodz EC1 heat and power plant, founded in 1907, still produced energy and provided heat

to the inhabitants of Lodz. The closed and deteriorating areas located in the very centre gave rise to the New Centre of Lodz after the object was shut down. According to the plans of the Municipal Office, the area where the EC1 is located has become a public space available to the residents after revitalization.

The primary task of urban planning was to create the space connecting different elements of the EC1 area, allowing it to have a functional link with external urban areas – in relation to the revitalized area. Restoration works are carried out for the purpose of maintenance of a unique, post-industrial climate there. In the area of the heat and power plant, existing forms of developed land, such as electric traction poles or strings of technological pipes, will be partially preserved. The empty objects take on a new dimension.



Special Zone of Culture



Special Zone of Culture with EC1-East complex

The historic EC1 division between the East and West objects will be preserved. Each of these places is revitalized with a view to pursuing other purposes.

Within the EC1 East, switching stations buildings, engine room and office building will be preserved. This area of heat and power plant is to serve cultural and artistic functions. It will be an open space for artists, young and talented people who want to express themselves through a given field of art. There will be enough space for it, for workshops, seminar rooms and galleries. There will also be the theatre of sound together with the studios for sound post-production. This part will be occupied by professional sound studios, giving the possibility to record a film or orchestral music. Appropriately designed space in acoustic, installation and technology terms will also allow for the so-called music uploading and assembling with film.

Within the EC1 East, there will also be a modern planetarium equipped with spherical 3D 8K cinema, as well as studios, workshops and galleries.

Another interesting thing will be Lake Remembrance multimedia project. It will allow to record on digital media the moments of everyday life of the inhabitants of Lodz. The idea behind this project is to preserve the history of Lodz inhabitants narrated by them. In a few decades, it will be possible to see and hear how the residents once lived, what was important to them and what problems and joys they had.

EC1 FROM THE SCIENTIFIC PERSPECTIVE

The second part of EC1 will be a group of EC1 West objects. There will be: switching station, complex of pumping stations, engine and boiler rooms, water

softening plant, as well as a cooling tower building. Interactive Science and Technology Centre will be established there. It will be the object dedicated to documentation and commemoration of technical ideas, including architectural and energy ones, in connection with the aesthetics of time and place as well as functionality typical for power plant. In the Centre, three educational paths related to the topic of energy will be established: energy, history of civilisation and science as well as 'microworld – macroworld' path.

The most important part of the Science and Technology Centre will be permanent displays, consisting of an interactive device enabling self-experimentation, observation and study of a particular physical phenomenon, chemical reaction or biological structure. Such an interaction determines the attractiveness of exhibition. For example, thanks to large format and transparent holographic foils, a multimedia show will be

Implementation of the project New Centre of Lodz is financed from the budget of the city of Lodz and the European Regional Development Fund under the Regional Operational Programme of Lodz Voivodeship.

The investment Lodz Fabryczna is financed from the budget of the city of Lodz and the European Regional Development Fund under the Infrastructure and Environment Operational Programme.

Błażej Moder

Managing Director of the New Centre of Lodz

The New Centre of Lodz programme is one of the biggest urban and investment challenges in the history of our city. Its implementation is aimed at reviving the Lodz downtown and creating new attractive places for living, working and spending leisure time. We want to create a district functioning around the clock, connected with Piotrkowska Street in urban and functional terms. Local development plan is adopted for the entire area. The issues related to

land ownership have been sorted out. Self-government and governmental sector have invested nearly 3 billion zlotys in the infrastructure and revitalization projects, as well as creation of attractive public spaces. Such a prepared place is now waiting for the actions of private investors. The success of this project will depend on their involvement. We hope that cooperation of public and private sector will make the New Centre a lively part of Lodz.

presented before the audience. It will create an illusion that they see a cross section of a selected machine and the moment of energy generation. It is just the concept of energy that is crucial to the narrative of the whole project of the Centre.

The concept of interactive Science and Technology Centre is based on the assumption that the existing part of the heat and power plant, along with preserved antique equipment in it, will become the base of historical narrative, recalling the times of opening and operation of the object. On this basis, the main visiting route will be marked out: from boilers through pumping station to control room, as well as detailed route, independent entertainment and cultural spaces. The climax of architectural narrative will be the industrial mood of the premises complemented by interactive and multimedia elements.

At the Centre, the selected disciplines of humanities can be presented, for example: archaeology or palaeontology

and social sciences. It will pursue the following objectives: science promotion, education as well as the development and promotion of Lodz and region.

LODZ FABRYCZNA

In the immediate vicinity of the former heat and power station, Lodz Fabryczna, the main railway station, is located. To put it mildly, it has not been the best showcase of the city. However, it is changing now. The railway station will become more beautiful and... go down into the ground. Thanks to this, the released space will be developed through the creation of the new part of the city, which had previously been split with railway tracks and the train station. In the New Centre, office buildings, restaurants, culture and entertainment buildings will be built. Thanks to its convenient transport accessibility, the Centre will be visited by tourists frequently. The idea is that this space could live 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

The area of reconstruction of the railway station covers an area of over 23 ha. It is currently one of the largest railway investments in the European Union. After the completion of the investment, Lodz will gain the most modern railway station in the country. The construction of the new railway station with the tunnel is associated with transportation of more than a half million cubic metres of soil, i.e. about 80 thousand lorries. The project is performed with the use of surface mining method.

The new railway station will have three levels. On the surface, there will only be entrance pavillions. At level -1, there will be the main hall for travellers and cash points. Level -2 will be situated 16.5 m underground. From there, the trains from four platforms, i.e. eight railway tracks, will depart.



Narutowicza Street/July 4th Square



Architects: Matylda Grabowska, Jacek Grabowski, Anna Grabowska during the opening ceremony of the Faculty of Philology of the University of Lodz, October 2014

BY JACEK BRYLSKI

Offering the unique

Projects created by AGG – Architekci Grupa Grabowski testify to the exceptional creativity and ingeniousness of their authors. AGG's award winning projects are recognized by the inhabitants of Lodz, Poles and even Europeans. They stun and surprise, reveal a distinct character, ensure investors' success and build a positive atmosphere around the events happening in Lodz.

AGG – Architekci Grupa Grabowski was established by Anna and Jacek Grabowscy. After a few intensive years of designing in Germany, they decided to introduce in 1995 an innovative solution to the Polish market – a perfectly coordinated design process involving many different professions. Advisory services and supervision over the project from the moment a plot of land was chosen until the very end were now handled in one place. Conforming to the highest standards is still AGG's credo, but today they also offer legal assistance, supervision over procedures and the building process and, what is particularly important, keeping to the budget.

With the aim of attracting large-scale clients, Anna and Jacek Grabowscy built a passionate team ready for the most demanding of projects. Knowledge, quality and talent go hand in hand here with reasonable cost of service. In 2009, Matylda Grabowska followed in her parents' footsteps and joined the team, bringing with her a breath of new style and creativity.

A CATALOGUE OF ACHIEVEMENTS

AGG has created in but a few years many landmark buildings. A number of them have received awards and some have become iconic – like the building of the Faculty of Philology of the University of Lodz (Pomorska Street, opposite the university campus). The moment it opened its doors in 2014, it became an object of interest and events'

venue. Other works of AGG include an office building and headquarters of Lodz Special Economic Zone. The architects won prestigious awards for the refurbishment of Ludwik Grohman's factory (19th century) situated in 22/24 Tymienieckiego Street. Among them were awards for: the best commercial building in Europe (international trade fair Expo Real 2013 in Munich), the best conversion (Eurobuild Awards 2013), the best office building (Prime Property Prize 2013 Lodz) and an honourable mention in Punkt dla Łodzi – for improving the aesthetics of Lodz. The ultimate accolade was a thank-you letter from Jerzy Grohman – Ludwik's descendant. This historic factory in Lodz became known all over Europe.

AGG authored also the famous Paragraf, i.e. the building of the Faculty of Law and Administration of the University of Lodz (near Solidarności roundabout). The building won ArchiTODTEN – Najpiękniejsze Polskie Uczelnie competition and it received Złote Wiertło award – a prize given to buildings showcasing the highest quality and a model cooperation between the investor, designer and contractor company. AGG also prides in having designed buildings for the Faculty of Management and the Faculty of Economics and Sociology of the University of Lodz. In the latter case, AGG also designed the assembly hall.

Among buildings that represent a modern architectural style of Lodz, we can mention such office buildings as Cross Point (former Próchnik), Red Tower (at the



New quarters of the Faculty of Philology of the University of Lodz



Headquarters of Lodz Special Economic Zone – once Grohman's factory situated in Tymienieckiego Street

junction of Piotrkowska Street and Mickiewicza Avenue) and SEW-Eurodrive Polska – for whom they also designed offices and an assembly plant.

MILITARY BASES AND FACTORIES

Among the more unusual projects was designing stations for F-16 aircraft in Łask and Krzesiny near Poznań. Architects from AGG were the first in Poland to make comprehensive and innovative designs of bases for a flight of F-16, taxiways as well as hangars functioning also as shelters.

The cooperation with large companies is one of the keynote features in AGG's portfolio. They designed a factory making dryers and an R&D centre for BSH Bosch Siemens and, for Indesit, a factory making washing machines and dryers in Radomsko. AGG's impeccable handling of the investors' projects resulted in further commissions from them and their subcontractors. The architects were entrusted yet again to design new factories and laboratories. Thus they became a considerable force in bringing foreign investors' factories into being.

HIDDEN POWER

A good project is created when the client's needs and the context of location are properly evaluated. But in AGG they go beyond 'good' – they transform the project into an architectural work of art. Their clients know that each project they commission to AGG will turn to be their own success.

The designers value Lodz's exceptional character and its potential; they also believe there is just one city like this in

the whole world. Lodz has hidden power, which is woken from slumber by certain events and people. Since the very beginning, Anna and Jacek Grabowscy (Lodz-born architects) were a sort of 'private promotion office of the city of Lodz' – by offering their services to investors they convinced them to locate their projects in Lodz and the region.

In December 2014, AGG left for Stuttgart taking part in a design, fashion and art fair called DEKUMO. They presented both the 'old' and the 'new' architecture of Lodz. They came with the aim of promoting Lodz as an intriguing place with palaces, townhouses and factories representing a unique architectural style. The architects displayed boards picturing the multinational heritage of Lodz, presented projects designed by AGG, including the refurbishment of Grohman's factory. They showed the kind of beauty which is characteristic solely for this city. AGG's stand drowned under the crowd of visitors captivated by Lodz's charm, its history, refurbishment methods and modern architecture.

Architecture influences people, cities and regions. In AGG they know it and so they take care that their designs always conform to the highest standards. Buildings they design become symbols, bring with them new quality, they decide about the exceptional character of a place and attract investors, tourists, politicians and scientists.

There is still so much to do though: from waking up the inhabitants to the fact that they live in an extraordinary city through to completing the transformation and revitalization process. Although AGG has already had its input, it treats each and every project as a new mission.

Photo: AGG



BY JAROSŁAW ZARADKIEWICZ

I will be designing

– After graduation, I could not imagine working with someone. I wanted to be independent and further develop my passion for architecture – Marcin Tomaszewski, CEO of Lodz Reform Architect studio, talks about the idea of starting his own business. Today, he can boast of dozens of completed projects and the honour received in a prestigious international competition – European Property Awards in the category of Architecture Single Residence.

Marcin Tomaszewski, born in 1985, graduated from the Faculty of Architecture and Urban Planning at the Lodz University of Technology. As part of his thesis, he prepared Louis Vuitton Atelier honoured project. As a young graduate, he immediately started his own business nearly five years ago. He was supported by the family and... received the EU grant from the employment agency to start his own business. Also, the experience and knowledge gained during his studies were invaluable.

Today, his Reform Architect is a design studio employing a group of 15 people – the professionals shaping architecture. – We share a similar view about reality, which becomes a source of creative inspiration in search for non-schematic ways of design – he talks about his team. They are mainly engaged in the design

of single-family residential buildings: houses, residences as well as service facilities and utilities. They also offer a comprehensive interior design.

The company provides full service in the scope of original projects of buildings and interiors. It provides services at all investor stages, starting with the collection of all the necessary arrangements and formal documents related to the investment, through the development of multi-sector design documents (conceptual, construction and executive), obtainment of building permits, and ending with the author's supervision.

His offer is primarily addressed to individual consumers – the people who want to build a timeless house, as well as to the companies and institutions open to modern design. At work, he is guided by the motto that a good architect is like a good actor who can play each role. When asked about the clients he is proud of, he replies without hesitation: – All of them because thanks to them we create the projects we have always dreamt of. Many of the projects created in the Reform Architect studio have been published in the domestic and foreign trade press.

The company's name originates from the English word 'reform' – i.e. reform, alter, shape, give a form, design character. He insists that his team of architects tries to be innovative at every step. Innovation is a part of their everyday life because they try to apply innovative solutions to every project. The company led by Marcin Tomaszewski is his passion and way of life. When asked what he will do in the future, he responds briefly without hesitation: – I will be designing.

Photo: Pawel Lawreszuk, Reform Architect studio





Tadeusz Baczyński, Managing Director of MDH

BY JACEK BRYLSKI

They move the world

Innovative solutions in the field of orthopedics and rehabilitation represent the domain of Lodz MDH company. In the past year, it was once again a double silver medalist in Najwyższa Jakość Quality International programme in the category of QI Product. It also received a 2014 Gazela Biznesu statuette and certificate of 'High Quality in Health Care 2014/2015'. Two products of Qmed brand were appreciated for the highest quality. One of them is pneumatic shoe with pressure control Scamper and SmartOrthic patient's activity monitoring system.

We meet customers' expectations in terms of quality, design as well as modernity of our products and services. Cooperation with us guarantees business success to each partner' – the company is guided by this motto since the beginning of its inception, i.e. already 15 years.

- From the very beginning, the company has set itself a goal to be recognised as a reliable business partner and trustworthy Polish manufacturer of medical devices
- Tadeusz Baczyński, the Managing Director, says.

MDH long-term goal is to gain the largest share in the portfolio of purchases of goods and services by dealers in Poland and continue to build the position of innovative creator and leading supplier of solutions in the field of non-invasive orthotic and rehabilitation solutions in the central, eastern and south-eastern Europe.

THEY DESIGN AND PRODUCE

MDH offers solutions in the field of orthotics and rehabilitation. It specialises in treating people with locomotor dysfunctions and is a manufacturer of



From left: Jakub Szary – constructor, Łukasz Małkowski – medical specialist, R&D Department

prophylactic footwear, orthotic articles and rehabilitation items. The company sells its own articles and has exclusive contracts for the world's well-known brands in the country and Europe, cooperates actively with several hundred shops with medical equipment in Poland as well as exports products under its own brand to the countries around the world. MDH is medical retailers' preferred supplier of goods and services in Poland. R&D department of the company is located in Lodz Special Economic Zone. The company's production takes place in Poland, Ukraine, Lithuania and in the Middle East. Its products are made of high-quality materials and meet all safety standards. The team of designers supervises quality and development, still perfecting products in accordance with the latest developments in technology and medical knowledge supported by research. It also offers medical equipment, which responds to the market demand in terms of functionally and design, and is in line with global trends in the medical industry. MDH has a quality management system that complies with the requirements of ISO 9001:2008 and standards for manufacturers and distributors of medical devices EN ISO 13485:2012 in terms of design, manufacture, distribution and service of orthopedic and rehabilitation products.

A WIDE RANGE OF PRODUCTS

The company offers three groups of products. The first consists of orthopedic products – all kinds of stabilizers for upper and lower extremities as well as abdominal and lumbar belts. Another group is rehabilitation products and rehabilitation aids: electric and manual wheelchairs,

multifunction devices for upright standing – parapodia, support legs, walkers and anti-pressure sore mattresses. The last group consists of prophylactic products – footwear for children, cosmetic articles for correcting and improving the comfort of feet, postnatal belts, prophylactic pillows for sleeping and travelling.

MDH is an owner or distributor of many brands that have gained a significant position in the market. Vitea Care is a group of products for rehabilitation. In turn, Meyra is a legend company in the world market of premium segment rehabilitation equipment. Both brands belong to Medort capital group. MDH also offers Qmed line of products, which includes a comprehensive supply of orthotic equipment for people with locomotor disabilities. Inflex is a group of high-tech products used for feet, while Memo is a brand of patented dynamic system controlling children's feet defects. This brand includes a wide range of footwear with sole diagnostic and corrective inserts.

– What helps to generate new products is continuous observation of the market and identification of its needs on the part of users of our products, as well as monitoring of trends in the directions set by world leaders in the industry. An extremely important issue for us is innovation. The proposals for new products are directed to the multi-disciplinary project team, which obtains feedback from users during the process of development. We organise panels, during which the expectations regarding products are shared by specialists in various fields, as well by the users themselves. This is why what we are introducing on different markets meets with positive opinions of

Łukasz Małkowski

medical specialist

Technological development in recent decades and access to new materials have caused that we have virtually unlimited possibilities in the field of medical equipment. We should be satisfied with the fact that Lodz company, following the example of the world's biggest brands, invests in its own research and development department through the employment of creative and ambitious people from all over Poland. MDH is trying to unite under its patronage scientific circles, medical professionals, athletes and people with disabilities. A common feature of this cooperation is popularisation of the Polish trend in the design, development and distribution of high-quality medical equipment. Close cooperation with sports clubs and foundations of rehabilitation and therapeutic profile in the process of design and development of our products allows for ongoing monitoring of implemented solutions for the professionals whose goal is to provide best quality medical equipment with the highest degree of functionality. This ultimately

translates into the satisfaction of users, regardless of their age. In fact, today, attention is drawn not only to the level of medical services, but also to the quality of the equipment, which primarily has to be tested, safe, increasingly aesthetic, or even have a designer look. Investments in our own technology and manufacturing park provide opportunities for continuous improvement.

A wide portfolio of the company responds to the needs of the patients suffering from musculoskeletal impairments, which require reliable medical equipment used every day, as well as to the requirements of active people, athletes, and, most importantly, those caring for the prevention of injuries and diseases of the musculoskeletal system. The policy pursued will not only help to catch up with the market leaders in Europe, but also, in the long run, will create the opportunity to compete with the brands from around the world. The effects of our involvement can be seen today. However, we will not certainly rest on our laurels. After all, what matters is human health!

doctors, physiotherapists, athletes and other users. The multiplicity of products stems from the desire to satisfy all the needs of the recipients of a comprehensive hardware and create a complex portfolio in the field of orthopedics, rehabilitation and prophylactics – Katarzyna Herka, Management Board representative for Quality Management systems, explains.

AWARDED INNOVATORS

MDH owns many patents and inventions. The company boasts of numerous awards, including Lodz Proponuje competition and Najwyższa Jakość or Gepard Biznesu emblems. The latest achievement of the company is a prestigious award for 2014 – Gazela Biznesu for the fastest growing small and medium businesses. In addition, MDH was awarded with the certificate 'High Quality in Health Care 2014/2015'.

– The received awards confirm that the development direction chosen by the company is correct. It also gives credence to our relations with business partners who see the growing strength of our organisation – Baczyński, the Managing Director, says.

The recent success of the company is associated with the implementation of the production of pneumatic shoe with

pressure control Scamper of Qmed brand and SmartOrthic patient's activity monitoring system.

Scamper shoe supports the process of treatment and rehabilitation for injuries, diseases and dysfunctions of the ankle, foot and lower leg. Orthotic design stabilises the affected area and prevents swelling. The unique pressure control system allows the assessment of appropriate level of compression, safe for skin and soft tissues. The most important feature of this system is the ability to use Scamper safely in patients with impaired sensory, who cannot independently assess the therapeutic level of compression.

On the other hand, Qmed SmartOrthic system is the first orthosis system that allows to control the therapeutic process. It is helpful in evaluating the lifetime of given equipment and the patient's activity level during the use of orthosis. All information is available for the physician, therapist and patient, and on its basis, it is possible to create a more effective therapeutic process, and the patients can comply with therapeutic rules easier.

MDH development department is working on new implementations, which will probably also be appreciated in the medical and rehabilitation environment.

BY JAROSŁAW ZARADKIEWICZ

They print mindfully

Jakub Bielecki and folding gluer Diana X 80/115, Heidelberg

22 years ago, brothers Eugeniusz and Roman Bielecki formed a small family printing office. The founders' initials gave name to Erbi. The company is still a family business. It is also a valued employer and reliable supplier of packaging products for the medical industry.

In 1993, the company employed seven people. They dealt with all the challenges faced by printing business. Thanks to their determination and ability to take concrete and firm decisions, they took on the most demanding tasks, by investing earned money in more advanced machine equipment.

Ten years ago, they decided to profile their printing offer. Their offer is directed mainly to customers in the pharmaceutical and cosmetics industries.

In 2008, the leadership in the company was taken over by Jakub Bielecki, who continues the development of printing office, among others, by implementing technological innovations to improve the quality of services provided, the prestige of the company and productivity.

THEY PRINT

The company offers a variety of possibilities for the production of printed cartons, pharmaceutical leaflets, folded instructions, as well as single and multi coloured instructions. At the request of the customer, 3D animations of packages can be prepared before production. All printed materials may be refined with

shiny, matt and dispersion UV varnishes with twin effect. Erbi's devices can perform embossing using Braille alphabet on packaging and all kinds of pharmacodes, visual codes and other features securing the products. The recipients of the packages are leading pharmaceutical companies from Poland and the world.

As the company's Managing Director, Jakub Bielecki, says, innovation means for him implemented latest technologies, increased quality and productivity, as well as modern management of the company. – In recent years, our company has implemented the projects, owing to which it is a leader in the packaging market and enjoys high reputation in the world of pharmacy and not only – the Managing Director emphasises.

THEY INVEST

The company continually expands its machine park. In recent years, it has been supported by the European Union programmes for this purpose. With the support of EU programmes, it managed, among others, to buy innovative folding gluer, enabling to glue cardboard boxes with a maximum speed of 500 m/min. Additional equipment includes Braille labelling system and a unique

ICM module of EyeC brand for glued boxes' vision control. It is possible to control all key parts of the package using the above sophisticated system. The module scans all packages and compares them with the template, which allows to identify all defects, such as: erroneous texts, missing letters or colours. The packages that do not meet the standards of production are automatically rejected. In addition, quality control department employs a blind person, fluent in using Braille, who validates pressing system.

The EU aid is also handy when installing a new folding line, owing to which the leaflets are made in a wide range of sizes of columns.

THEY CARE ABOUT QUALITY AND THE ENVIRONMENT

The greatest success of the company is taking over a leadership in the production of packaging for the pharmaceutical industry, which could effectively compete with international pharmaceutical corporations. The company has used rigorous systems for quality and environmental management according to ISO standards. As one of the few companies in the world, it has used the PN-EN ISO 15378: 2012 since 2012 for the outer packages made of cardboard, paper leaflets and labels for the pharmaceutical industry applying good manufacturing practice.

At Erbi, the concept of environmental protection, involving the production of high-quality products in harmony with the environment, as well as minimization of the impact on the environment, are crucial. Therefore, the company focuses on protection of the environment in the production processes and transport when selecting raw materials.

– We comply with the law on the protection of the environment as well as prevent pollution and



Folding machine GUK FA 45/6

environmental accidents through proper waste management and cooperation with subcontractors, for whom care for the environment constitutes a primary goal. We provide a hundred percent supervision over waste according to carefully prepared plan – Krzysztof Bielak, Production Manager, says.

Any waste generated during production is under strict control and is recycled here. All chemicals and paints have appropriate certificates certifying their negligible impact on the environment. For nearly five years, the company has not used isopropyl alcohol.

THEY BELIEVE IN THE FUTURE

Jakub Bielecki stresses that the company's motto is taking care of the customer, as well as emphasises that the orders are carried out in accordance with appropriate standards to ensure their highest quality and timely implementation. He adds that the company has always taken into account the best interest of very demanding customers of the pharmaceutical industry, and its goal is to get their satisfaction with the work performed reliably.

For Erbi, the main priority is the quality of services because uninterrupted control is exercised at every stage of production, from checking raw materials, through the production process to the final verification of finished products.

– Our company primarily employs highly qualified personnel. We employ experienced permanent staff, now made up of 80 people. The employees are our greatest asset. Owing to them, we have a dynamic development of the company because they service the state-of-the-art machines – Jakub Bielecki emphasises.

The Managing Director strongly believes that he will continue to cooperate with existing customers, employees and suppliers in the future. He wants to develop the company, open to new projects and technologies. – When focusing on professionalism and highest standards, we strive to maintain a leading position in our sector on the Polish and foreign market – Jakub Bielecki says.



Folding gluer Diana X 80/115, Heidelberg



Jarosław Zaradkiewicz talks with Michał Piernikowski, Director of Lodz Design Festival, about Lodz design, work on the festival and the audience.

If you had to define Lodz design school briefly, in encyclopedic terms, what would you say?

It is hard to talk about a uniform Lodz school of design. I think that we can take a risk and talk about some Polish school of design. Personally, I like the definition, according to which, resourcefulness distinguishes us. In my opinion, this feature in Lodz is very clear, more than in other Polish cities. When I analyze what is happening in Lodz, I come to the conclusion that many of the most valuable activities start from the bottom up. This is the case with Lodz school of design – it is distinguished by the ability to cope independently and solve current problems in an innovative, creative and just resourceful way.

This is also your recipe for the success of Lodz Design Festival. When creating this event, you and your team had to be resourceful. What else has contributed to the fact that you are successful?

We have tried to answer what comes to us from the outside. We have managed to do this as we focus on team and cooperation with people. This is the best recipe. We also try to listen to the voice of immediate environment, but mainly to the opinions that flow from the audience, react to them, as well as respond to suggestions and questions.

Is this an event organised for the audience rather than for the immediate environment?

The festival is for the audience rather than for organisers. Designers, manufacturers, of course, are also our customers, and, at the same time, they are our natural partners in preparing the best offer for the viewers who participate in festival events.

What is the public response to the last edition of the festival?

We are pleased and proud that, for several years, the public response has been mostly positive on the side of the audience, journalists, partners and viewers. Of course, there are also critical voices and we do not particularly listen. Each year the festival is changing. The past edition is, for example, the change of the venue of the festival, which was held in the newly renovated spaces of Art_Inkubator. We have completed a couple of new points of the programme, among others: Test Zone – an interactive space, prepared jointly with Tabanda project group or House of Tomorrow exposure, where furnishing products and services that aspire to the status of timeless solutions were presented. As every year, the festival touched upon social issues. We were thinking about what interesting and important things happen in the world, not only in the

While working on the next edition, we start from the previous assessment. One of the biggest successes of LDF in 2014 was the Test Zone, the space that allows viewers to interact with materials, have fun and learn about their properties. Such activities will be continued by us this year

environment of designers, but also in our societies. Most positive responses concern the fact that we organise the event encouraging the viewers to consider how presented objects correspond to modern society, generate or respond to happening changes. Lodz Design Festival is an event where people come to look for inspiration, meet interesting individuals and feel good, creative energy.

What new things are you preparing for the next edition of the festival?

I would not want to reveal the details yet. While working on the next edition, we start from the previous assessment. One of the biggest successes of LDF in 2014 was the Test Zone, the space that allows viewers to interact with materials, have fun and learn about their properties. Such activities will be continued by us this year. For sure, we will continue to raise the issues related to new technologies and forms of production, such as, for example, 3D printing. An important element will also be topics related to the city and urbanity.

When planning the festival, do you have your favourite people you would like to invite? Is it difficult to convince world famous people to come to Lodz?

It is becoming easier because, for several years, we have been trying to work with curators from around the world and participate in other events of a similar character. We have a lot of friends among the designers and curators who know our festival, and they may act as recommending individuals. It happens more and more often that we do not invite designers, but they first come out with the initiative for cooperation. The problems are of a different nature. The calendars of biggest stars are quite tightly filled, at least one year in advance. October is quite intense period, when it comes to events related to designing activities in the world. That month, many events take place in London, in Eindhoven. At that time, we fight for more time rather than try to attract others with prestige and quality of the event.

On the other hand, there are young designers who want to show off. Is it difficult to select the works accepted for the competitions?

There are more and more applications. This is mostly quantitative growth because the last few years are the time



Lodz Design Festival 2014

in which the design has just been fashionable. We have also noticed an increase in quality, and it is more difficult to choose or select winners. A few years ago, when we started our flagship competition and 'make me' exhibition!, dozens of applications were sent, and the good ones made up literally 20–30 percent. Last year, a few hundred applications were submitted, and the vast majority of them were the projects prepared with care at every stage of the design process. Several years ago, the deliberations of the jury lasted for three – four hours, and now they occupy the entire day and are quite stormy.

How does Lodz compare with submitted applications?

We have many applications from Lodz to participate in different parts of the festival programme. What distinguishes our city are full of energy, creative people creating such initiatives as Pan Tu Nie Stał, Ładne Halo, Studio Rygalik, Topografie... Their commitment affects the unique character of the festival.

The previous edition of LDF was very important for Lodz. Then, we were dealing, among others, with the processes associated with Do It Yourself and so-called maker movement because we are fortunate that it is very active in our city. This is the essence of Lodz, bottom-up movement centered on the joint activities of the group of people aiming at achieving common goals. Hence our cooperation, e.g. with Lodz FabLab.

Certainly, there are also important textile traditions in Lodz. For several years, the number of applications related to Lodz textiles has been increasing. This has something of Lodz, and these projects are at world-class level.

Thank you for the talk.

BY JAROSŁAW ZARADKIEWICZ

Let's do our job

In Lodz, there are dozens of them. For socially vulnerable people, they help to find their place in the labour market. They are social enterprises called social cooperatives.

As part of widely understood regeneration, the support for the inhabitants of Lodz to find themselves in the changing realities of the economy and labour market plays an important role. Such a chance is given to the social cooperatives.

They are a kind of cooperative of workers – the social enterprise whose members work in person. The cooperative must operate for a year. After this time, its members should start independent professional work. The main objective of such projects is not the multiplication of profits, but the socio-professional integration of the people excluded socially or in a difficult situation.

BECAUSE PEOPLE GO TO THE CINEMA

Four good cinema-loving friends have decided to familiarise the inhabitants of Lodz with interesting and

independent films. All of them are connected with a Ded Flaj Prodakszynz production group. Only Wojciech Wojtysiak (the main initiator behind the establishment of cooperative and of the cinema) has cinematic experience, because he once ran Lemon Cinema, where he organised, among others, Class B cinema screenings. He has co-organised a number of independent film festivals, including 'Relanium' Festival of Antidepressant Films, and is a graduate of Political Science at the University of Lodz. Mariusz Szulc is a philologist. 'A passionate editor and cinematographer' – this is what he says about himself. On the other hand, Kacper Olejnik, almost an engineer, is an avid scout who has sailing and motorboat patents. Adam Grodnicki worked at the post office, the museum and served in the army. He has almost finished graduate studies at the department of English philology. In 2013, they decided together to establish a social cooperative,



BODO cinema



LOCUS

and six months later, in January 2014, they opened their own cinema.

They knew about several cultural institutions in Lodz, which operate as thriving social cooperatives, so they decided to make an effort and run their own social enterprise. – The impact of funding from the EU funds, promoting the development of such activities, was of considerable importance. It allowed us to start from a high level. We ensure that this type of business functions. It is a question of the team, which, as in our case, had a lot of common experience in a creative and organisational work – they talk about their beginnings.

ODBLASK social cooperative was founded to pursue passion for the cinema and culture. Therefore, they could set up the cinema. BODO cinema. Why BODO? First, they refer to the pre-war Polish cinema lover Eugeniusz Bodo, but the name is also a tribute to the contemporary off-film director Bodo Kox. By the way, the slogan 'Because people go to the cinema' ('BODO kina się chodzi') was created.

They present their offer to all those who are interested in independent art cinema and who want to see unique things. A strong advantage is also a documentary and animated cinema, very often not presented elsewhere. They think that their greatest achievement is that they have run their business for a year and have had no debts or loans. They still associate their future with the cinema. They want to be a strong and recognisable brand. They also want to extend their activities to include other industries.

Now BODO cinema is an intimate place, which, in addition to fulfilling its primary function, is a multi-purpose cultural institution. Apart from the typical cinematic repertoire, it also presents themed shows and film screenings, as well as festivals, including the authorial 'Relanium' Festival of Antidepressant Films. In addition to the moving images, music and widely understood art are important for them, and thus there is already one step for

the concerts and theater performances to be performed on the stage. The cinema can be rented for other occasions. Company laudation of a film? Wedding anniversary including presentation of the first dance? Another eighteenth birthday? Why not?

COLLEAGUES

The place where they used to work was far from ideal. It was tiring and toxic. When they came into contact with the subject of social cooperatives in the course of their professional duties, they came up with the idea to personally take the initiative. The prospect of running own business with a strongly marked social accent was tempting. It had taken a while before they made their willingness known by others. But as they already did so – they only strengthened themselves in their decisions. Search for the ultimate composition of the cooperative was easy and difficult at the same time. It was known that there had to be trusted individuals, with whom it would be good and productive to work with and who could take responsibility for the emerging company. From the outset, it was clear that a good team decides about the success of the project. It ended with success – six women sharing friendship or blood ties decided to establish a social cooperative.

The founders of the cooperative were: Małgorzata Zwolińska (has the characteristics of a natural leader), Monika Bednarek (presents volcano forces, energy, ideas and enthusiasm), Monika Działak (a source of peace and patience), Magda Roszewska (a good team spirit), Ola Chołuj (chases troubles with laughing) and Ela Cendrowicz (cares for the family cooperative). In addition to the establishment of cooperative, women are the mothers of six children, mostly boys. There were many ideas for the type of business activity, but none of them was as appealing to them as co-working, despite the fact that the first reactions were, gently speaking, skeptical. Desk for rent – an idea



Szansa

taken from breakfast television – was something quite strange, unexplored and not fully understood. However, at the same time, they saw the same potential in that idea, which they wanted to develop. And that is how LOCUS (a place) was established. The place of work, learning, meetings, development of relationships, maintaining contacts, training and development.

Currently LOCUS is a space for business. Cozy offices, business rooms and comfortable professionally equipped training rooms, rented by the hour, will satisfy even the most demanding customers. In addition, LOCUS offers virtual office services/address. There is also a possibility to register the company using the address of the office and use it for marketing, correspondence and for office service (full secretarial-office service rendered to the companies) purposes. Smile and delicious, freshly brewed coffee are always free for everyone.

The foundresses of the cooperative emphasise that their company gives them the opportunity to reconcile their business aspirations with the need for social activities. According to them, their greatest achievement is building a significant position on the Lodz market business services in a relatively short period of time. When asked about their motto, they reply: 'Let's do our job – as best we can.'

THERE IS AN OPPORTUNITY (SZANSA)

The idea for the opening of social integration site was conceived by Prof. Zdzisława Janowska, associated with the Faculty of Management at the University of Lodz. For years, she has actively counteracted unemployment. – For a long time, I wanted to create the place where the people who supposedly cannot cope with their life on account of long-term unemployment and a variety of adversities could counter this situation, make a living and just fulfill their needs. I wanted that my support rendered to the disadvantaged, unemployed, single mothers and fathers, the homeless and those facing eviction ended with a concrete and tangible result – the originator of the idea says.

Zdzisława Janowska has gathered around her many friends who have supported her.

Lodz Szansa is the first social cooperative formed by legal persons. The cooperatives owned by natural persons must have a minimum of five founders. The ones established by legal persons – must include at least two entities. In the case of this cooperative, they are International Women's Foundation and Progression Foundation. The multi-branch social cooperative, launched with the support of social forces aided by the entrepreneurs, was established.

It started with the idea to counter unemployment and activate the local community. It took two years to find the right property. – We visited different buildings. They were either too large or too small. Finally, the city offered us the present pavilion, empty for many years, which, as local residents remember, was once vibrant with life, and even hosted family celebrations – Prof. Janowska recalls. The downside to the location in Sielanka Park was that the pavilion was the building in name only. It was in ruin, without utilities. We managed to restore it to its former functionality with the support of more than 60 entrepreneurs and individuals.

– Previous experience in the construction industry gained at Szansa confirms my belief that – contrary to popular opinion – Lodz business can be socially responsible. Even if the entrepreneurs are surprised at first contact, then after a while, the rank of our project, the real possibility of a positive final and active part in creating something special for the most needy generate faith in the meaning of social action – Zdzisława Janowska praises the entrepreneurs.

Today, Lodz Szansa is a meeting place for the residents of nearby settlements. There, they can not only eat tastily and cheaply, but also spend their leisure time, participate in classes and workshops, during which they can produce all kinds of everyday objects. Another important thing is that the cooperative provides jobs for many people.

– We have not only wanted to create a dining room, but also want it to be a place for meetings, discussions and cultural events. After all, Szansa is also a senior club and Cultural Tolerance Centre. It is the place where the visitors can learn about culture, music and culinary arts from many countries – the originator of the idea says. The most popular attractions are the events integrating the community representing all age groups (dance and Christmas parties, fairs promoting self-made products). At Szansa, everyone can also organise family gatherings: name-days, christenings or anniversaries.

At Szansa, the visitors can take advantage of tailor's emergency services. In the future, home appliance repair and cleaning services, care for children and elderly will be available. The residents who treat Szansa as a second home play a very active role in promoting the cooperative.

BY EWA KLEPACKA-GRYZ, JACEK SOBOL

Keep the world reasonably at bay

Is it possible to live in unison with yourself and the world at one and the same time?
Yes, as long as you know, or rather feel, where you end and where the world begins.

Imagine the following: somebody calls you with a business offer. The moment you say 'yes', you already feel uneasy. You accept the offer because: you are responsible, professional, because for you the word 'no' doesn't exist in business, you are scared that the word will spread and there won't be another offer, and so on. You accepted it whereas you should have rejected the offer or at least asked for time to consider. The moment you agree, your body begins to protest: your voice starts to shake, heartbeat accelerates, or you feel pain in the solar plexus area. Evening turns out to be even worse: migraine, stomach ache or sleeping problems. When the time comes to fulfil your commitment, things go from bad to worse: you are late for the meeting or you fail to come at all (because, e.g. your car breaks down), the meeting is a total failure, your contract gets lost or it turns out to be entirely to your disadvantage. A voice in your head says: 'I knew something was wrong from the word go'. But will it be a precious lesson for you?

Next time, when your head sends a warning signal in answer to some outside information, will you at least notice it? Yes, but...

The ability to keep the world reasonably at bay means to choose between what the world expects and what is good for ourselves. It is like building a house and fencing your plot of land. At first, when you are constructing the house, your fortress, the land has no fence. The neighbours, therefore, feel free to cross your property taking shortcuts on their way home or to the shop. You must decide what kind of a barrier to set up. You can opt for a hermetic wall with a small gate, locked and bolted, which you open to let only those few select ones. Then, you will be perceived as a recluse and treated as a weirdo. Fine, as long as you don't mind. You might also install a gate without a lock or locked only for the night. In that case, you risk unwelcome guests during the day. Do you like to have your house open? Great. Remember, though, that others might want to guard the privacy of their houses more than you. And they have every right to do so. An in-between solution is to consciously decide who to let in and when to do it. What does it mean in everyday life? You consider each business offer, carefully analysing the pros and cons; sometimes you accept it and sometimes not; you know that you have every right to reject



The ability to keep the world reasonably at bay means to choose between what the world expects and what is good for ourselves

it, but you must be also ready to accept the consequences of your choice.

The world has in store for us many offers – both profitable and unfavourable. We accept some of them because we know there are real profits ahead. Sometimes they come after a while. When, however, we accept an offer feeling threatened by ensuing rejection, we are in deep trouble. Then, it is our body that suffers. It uses various symptoms to shout out 'Don't do it!'

The trick is to know our own limits, to know what is good for us and what is not, to know what we want to accept, and when we should say 'no' or 'maybe'.

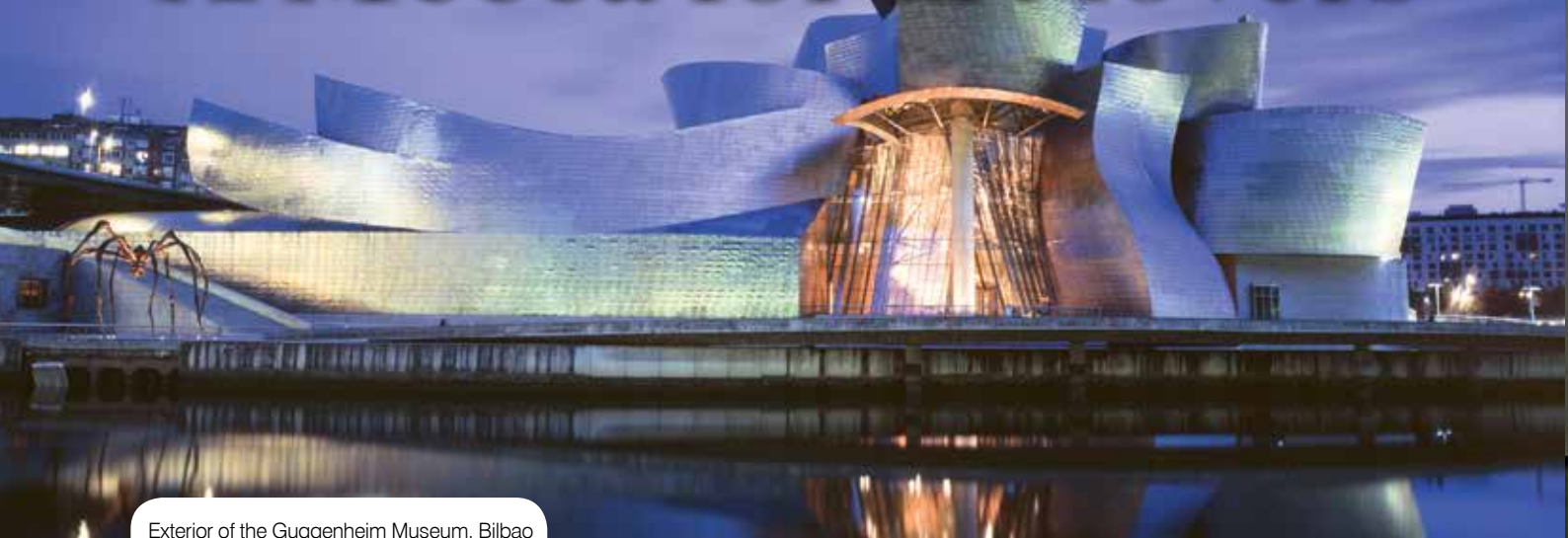
Exercise:

Take a piece of paper and draw a symbol of yourself, e.g. a circle. In the surrounding space draw people, both the closest ones and those more distant: colleagues, boss, and so on. Take a look at your picture. How far away did you place other people? Do you feel overwhelmed or isolated? Now draw this map again, the way you want it to look. Implement these changes in real life.

Photo: © papa/Fotolia.com

BY JAROSŁAW ZARADKIEWICZ

A Mecca for art lovers



Exterior of the Guggenheim Museum, Bilbao

Bilbao, a Basque city in northern Spain, was a thriving place in the 19th century. Yet 30 years ago, it was lost to memory. Comprehensive urban revitalization resuscitated the declining city, and the cooperation between the public and the private sector produced effects which many cities making revamping efforts can dream of.

Bilbao is a port that has served the Basques as a window on the world for centuries. The height of its development coincided with the Industrial Revolution. The iron ore and the smelting industry were the bulwarks guarding the region's prosperity. This land neighbored on mining regions as well as new industrial and residential centres. Towards the late 19th century, Bilbao became one of the major cities of industrial Western Europe.

As the time passed, the significance of the city withered away. The most trying period started in the 1970s, when Spain struggled in the aftermath of the oil crisis. This period was a time of profound economic transformation, leading mainly to deindustrialization, for the local uncompetitive industry. Once a paragon of modernity, in the 1980s it became a symbol of atrophied, post-industrial centres.

CREATING A STRATEGY

First efforts to bring Bilbao to its former glory began in the 1980s. It was then that Bilbao's Land Development Plan was created, which drew attention to the city's declining status. The plan specified that the central aim of Bilbao's policy is

to curb this process, to transform the place in a dynamic financial centre and to develop the service sector.

The plan specified four areas to undergo comprehensive rejuvenation and also identified key actions which would boost the place; it listed precise aims, means and strategies for each of the areas. The postulates included, e.g. the development of land transport, a sea port, an airport, housing developments and venues promoting the city's social and cultural image. Developing a partnership between the public and private sectors was viewed as necessary in order to effectively plan and manage the revitalization process.

What characterized Bilbao's project was that it rested the bulk of initiative and financing on public institutions and applied long-term and multifaceted approach to the problem. The aim was to implement solutions enhancing a cosmopolitan character of the city and upgrading its status by leveraging its potential.

THE GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM

Abandoibarra, 35 ha of land spread along the waterfront in the city centre, was one of the areas to be revived. It was here that the Guggenheim Museum and the Euskalduna



Elssie Ansareo, 'The Dance of the Flâneuses (La danse des flâneuses)', 2007, the Guggenheim Museum, Bilbao

Conference Centre and Concert Hall (buildings promoting Bilbao as a cultural and convention hub) were to be quartered.

Hailed as a priority from the very start, it became a flagship of Bilbao's revitalization. It was the so-called 'area of possibilities' jump-starting the revitalization process of the whole city. This museum boasts one of the most extravagant buildings on the globe designed by a world-famous architect, Frank Gehry. Not surprisingly, as soon as the construction started in 1992, the project was widely publicized. But it was only a cog in the enormous restructuring machine.

The municipal authorities were aware they couldn't go alone on their way to create from scratch a museum of contemporary art. That is why they partnered with one of the most prestigious institutions dealing with modern art – a foundation established by Solomon Guggenheim, a famous American industrialist and art collector. The city gave land and money to build the museum and the foundation was obliged to maintain it, display a part of its famous collection and organise temporary exhibitions. This arrangement is cited as one of the best examples of public-private partnerships in the world.

The museum was opened in 1997 and within the first year, it welcomed more than 1.4 million visitors. It sparked a dynamic growth in the number of tourists drawn to Bilbao's attractions and its artistic offer. Foreigners constitute over 60 percent of visitors.

Thousands of new workplaces that proved to be stable are among the results brought on by Bilbao's revitalization. In

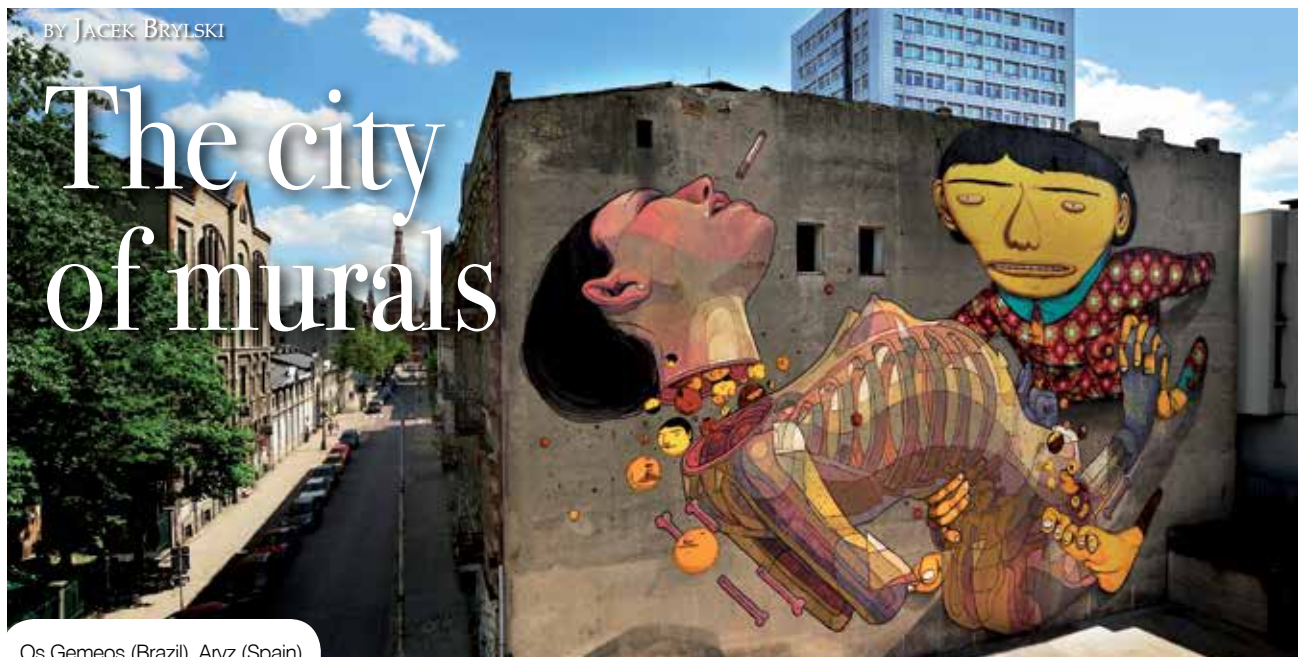
1995 the unemployment in the city was 14.5 percent and ten years later it fell to 9.5 percent. Since its door was opened, the museum has created more than 4 thousand workplaces in the museum itself as well as ancillary businesses: hotels, restaurants and shops. The city is said to have acted as a catalyst encouraging other museums to restructure themselves and helping numerous galleries to open.

A UNIQUE CASE

Around the world, the museum serves as Bilbao's hallmark. It also helped the place to rank among the most modern European cities. However, the building itself was an integral element of a wider scheme that included renovation and the development of infrastructure.

Despite the unquestioned success of the projects, it must be stressed though that Bilbao is still being revitalized. Far from being idle, the authors behind the change pursue the project of improving the quality of urban space.

'The spectacular success of Bilbao's strategy may be used in some cases as a reference point when planning a revitalization. Yet, treating Bilbao as a blueprint for creating and implementing revitalization should not mean blind copying in the hope of repeating the «Guggenheim effect». To be able to do that, one would need a second Bilbao – a city with similar economic, political and social background. We should rather make an intelligent use of Bilbao's experience' – says Joanna Orzechowska-Wałaszewska, PhD (sociologist and economist in the Institute of European Studies of the Jagiellonian University) in 'Bilbao's Success Possible Only in Bilbao'.



Filling Lodz urban fabric with multi-dimensional, modern art, which will significantly improve the image of Lodz is the primary assumption of Urban Forms Foundation.

It wants to give the city an artistic and original value through street art.

The main tool for achieving this goal is large paintings, i.e. murals created directly on the facades of buildings, which change the look of given space in a permanent way.

Lodz is visited by more and more tourists, who want to admire the city's murals. They are created owing to Urban Forms Foundation, founded in 2009. Its activities are focused on a widely understood urban culture, focusing on organisation, promotion and support of independent artistic and social initiatives. Urban Forms promotes 'living' culture and art, which allows for the community to take an active part in organised events. The Foundation promotes activities in urban iconosphere, which represents a manifestation of artistic creativity, and is also a tool for social regeneration.

LIVE GALLERY

The original project of the Foundation is Urban Forms Gallery. It is a permanent exhibition of street art in the public space of Lodz. At the moment, it consists of 35 large-format paintings – murals – placed directly on the facades of the buildings in the city centre. They form an artistic trail accessible to all residents and visitors.

The basic idea of Urban Forms Gallery project is to create a permanent exhibition of street art in the public space in the very centre of Lodz. The exhibition consists mainly of large-format paintings painted on the facades of tenement houses in the city centre by outstanding artists from around the world. In the coming years, the project is to be extended to other urban art objects such as sculpture, installation, street jewellery, etc. However, most important is to maintain the highest quality of the whole project. Therefore, Urban Forms invites to cooperation the elected representatives of the world's leading artists in public space.

ART FOR ALL

Over the last five years, the city gallery, including dozens of exhibits, has been created. It can be explored on foot within a few hours. Due to the fact that the gallery is located in a public space, the Foundation makes efforts to ensure the greatest attractiveness of the project to all city population, not only connected



Daleast (China), ul. Łąkowa 10

directly with street art or art in general. Therefore, the entire project is focused on accentuating the aspects of fine art, moving away from strictly conceptual projects that may be illegible for the majority of the public. Owing to the appropriate selection of artists, an incredibly rich and diverse range of artistic concepts will be presented. The creators are not bound by any imposed form and theme.

Murals can be admired individually. It is also possible to take advantage of organised guided tours prepared by Urban Forms. This offer is presented to schools, businesses, hotels, hostels and private persons. Coaches or buses move along a specially prepared route so that the travel time could be the most optimal. The tour stops at selected paintings, where the guide – Michał Bieżyński, Artistic Director of Urban Forms Foundation in the years 2009–2014 – introduces the project from behind the scenes, i.e. he talks about various murals, artists, art techniques, as well as answers any questions. This tour usually takes about three hours, but the time and the number of visited murals are matched to the capabilities and needs of tourists.

STREET FESTIVAL

The murals are created throughout the year. However, once a year, artistic events are accumulated in the form of festival, where the artists from around the world visit Lodz. Urban Forms Gallery Festival takes place on a regular basis in the months of September and October, and has already permanently remained in the repertoire of cultural events in Lodz. In 2012, 'Graffiti Art'

Michał Bieżyński:

In our project, we have been able to gather the works of a wide variety of artists. Some of them create purely figurative murals, others deal with abstraction. There are also those who work on the brink of the two worlds. Some are close to realism; others are a little more comic. Some of the murals emanate a variety of colours, others are more subdued or are simply monochromatic. They are created only using a template. Some of the works have only been painted with acrylic paint, and there are works, where just spray paint has been used. The entire project presents a wide range of artistic possibilities – each inhabitant can choose their favourite image, artist, kind of creative work or aesthetics. Still, taking into account the comments on the internet or in real life, this is the way it works.

From the beginning, we have talked about the fact that we have a chance to create something on a global scale in Lodz, owing to the number of empty walls in the centre of the city, but most of all, to their close location. This design leaves a permanent mark on the urban space of Lodz. If we take into consideration the number of articles and various publications around the world, Gallery Urban Forms greatly impacts the image of Lodz. I am talking here, e.g. about CNN or the Huffington Post. German ARD broadcaster came to Lodz just to make a material after taking the tour of murals. The number of publications on hundreds of websites, portals, blogs or fan pages is amazing. The project itself begins to function exactly as we expected in the beginning – people come to Lodz from different parts of the world to see these murals live.

– a prestigious French magazine presenting contemporary urban art considered this event to belong to the five most important street art festivals in the world.

As emphasised by the representatives of the Foundation, the main objective of the project is to change the image of Lodz permanently and improve its everyday aesthetics significantly. Owing to this project, now the city of Lodz is already associated worldwide with valuable and innovative art placed in public spaces. Large format paintings have become one of the main 'city landmarks', and crowds of tourists raising their heads testify to the success of the project.

INTERBUD CONSTRUCTION FAIR, ROOFING SHOWROOM

27 FEBRUARY – 1 MARCH

HALA EXPO, AL. POLITECHNIKI 4

WWW.INTERBUD.INTERNETSERVIS.PL, WWW.EXPO-LODZ.PL

18TH LODZ EDUCATIONAL FAIR

5–6 MARCH

LODZ INTERNATIONAL FAIR, UL. KS. SKORUPKI 21

WWW.TARGI.LODZ.PL, WWW.TARGIEDUKACYJNE.COM

HEY CONCERT

6 MARCH, 8.00 PM

WYTWÓRNIĄ CLUB, UL. ŁĄKOWA 29

WWW.WYTWORNIĄ.PL

PERFORMANCE OF SHEN YUN CHINESE CLASSICAL DANCE AND MUSIC ENSEMBLE

7 MARCH, 7.30 PM; 8 MARCH, 2.00 PM

GRAND THEATRE, PL. DĄBROWSKIEGO 1

WWW.OPERALODZ.COM, WWW.SHENYUN.COM/PL/LODZ/

CONCERT 'PIAF! THE SHOW'

7 MARCH, 8.00 PM

WYTWÓRNIĄ CLUB, UL. ŁĄKOWA 29

WWW.WYTWORNIĄ.PL

21ST INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF PLAYS PLEASANT AND UNPLEASANT

7 MARCH – 12 APRIL

POWSZECHNY THEATRE, UL. LEGIONÓW 21

WWW.POWSZECHNY.PL/PL/FESTIWAL

CONCERT BY PERFECT 'WSZYSTKO MA SWÓJ CZAS' – TOUR ON THE OCCASION OF THE 35TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE BAND

8 MARCH, 7.30 PM

ATLAS ARENA, AL. BANDURSKIEGO 7

WWW.ATLASARENA.PL

1ST LODZ BACH MARATHON – CONCERT III

10 MARCH, 7.00 PM

ARTHUR RUBINSTEIN PHILHARMONIC

UL. NARUTOWICZA 20/22

WWW.FILHARMONIA.LODZ.PL

AL DI MEOLA JAZZ CONCERT – BEATLES & MORE

13 MARCH, 8.00 PM

WYTWÓRNIĄ CLUB, UL. ŁĄKOWA 29

WWW.WYTWORNIĄ.PL

21ST FAIRS – TOURISTIC SITES WHERE CULTURES MEET

13–15 MARCH

LODZ INTERNATIONAL FAIR, UL. KS. SKORUPKI 21

WWW.TARGI.LODZ.PL

CONCERT OF THE 'CLASSIC MEETS POP' SERIES

21 MARCH, 7.00 PM

ATLAS ARENA, AL. BANDURSKIEGO 7

WWW.ATLASARENA.PL

18TH FAIR OF PHOTOGRAPHIC, FILM, AUDIO AND VIDEO EQUIPMENT 'FILM VIDEO FOTO'

26–28 MARCH

LODZ INTERNATIONAL FAIR, UL. KS. SKORUPKI 21

WWW.TARGI.LODZ.PL, WWW.FILMVIDEOFOTO.PL

INTERNATIONAL THEATRE DAY 'OPERA WITHOUT BORDERS'

27 MARCH, 12.00 PM

GRAND THEATRE, PL. DĄBROWSKIEGO 1

WWW.OPERALODZ.COM

'VIOLETTA LIVE' CONCERT

29 MARCH, 2.30 PM

ATLAS ARENA, AL. BANDURSKIEGO 7

WWW.ATLASARENA.PL

CONCERT BY STEVEN WILSON – HAND CANNOT ERASE TOUR 2015

8 APRIL, 8.00 PM

WYTWÓRNIĄ CLUB, UL. ŁĄKOWA 29

WWW.WYTWORNIĄ.PL

1ST E-TELEKOM FAIR

8–10 APRIL

LODZ INTERNATIONAL FAIR, UL. KS. SKORUPKI 21

WWW.TARGI.LODZ.PL

LODZ REAL ESTATE AND INTERIOR DESIGN FAIR – HOUSE OR FLAT

11–12 APRIL, 10.00 AM – 5.00 PM (FROM 12 APRIL UP TO 4.00 PM)

ATLAS ARENA, AL. BANDURSKIEGO 7

WWW.ATLASARENA.PL, WWW.LODZKIETARGI.PL/O-TARGACH

LODZ MARATHON AND 'RUN & FUN' SPORTS FAIR

17–18 APRIL

ATLAS ARENA, AL. BANDURSKIEGO 7

WWW.ATLASARENA.PL, WWW.LODZMARATON.PL

10TH ACADEMIC JOB FAIR

21 APRIL

HALA EXPO, AL. POLITECHNIKI 4

WWW.ATP.LODZ.PL