# A place of memory – monument – counter-monument

## Artistic strategies of commemoration in Krakow's district of Podgórze

**Wojciech Szymański**

## Abstract

In recent years, Krakow's district of Podgórze has witnessed the erection of several works in public space that are concerned with the memory of the place. A monumental piece erected by Witold Cęckiewicz in the 1960s in the former Płaszów Concentration Camp has been joined by contemporary works. It is especially the Ghetto Heroes Square and its direct vicinity that have been addressed by artists and designers who, through their works, i.e. Mateusz Okoński's *Purification*, Łukasz Skąpski's *10 cubic metres of Krakow's wintertime air*, and a structure in the form of multiple chairs by Lewicki and Łatak's studio entered into a dialogue with the paradigm of counter-monumentality and postmemory. For common viewers and casual passers-by, as well as for residents of the district, these works are hardly evocative of recent history, or the events they are meant to commemorate. Do these works, with their consciously taken position on the verge of the visible, that is, on the verge of what can be considered art, fulfil their commemorative role? Can the excess of the invisible change at some point into the visible? These questions offer a starting point not only for the discussion of the above-mentioned works in the context of analogous creations in contemporary art of the last two decades, but also for a wider discussion of monumental and counter-monumental art after the Shoah.

## Contents

### Podgórze as a place of memory

[1]     The history of the district of Podgórze, separated by the Vistula River from the old Krakow, suggests a paradox of sorts: Podgórze was granted city rights in 1785, while one hundred and twenty years later, in 1915, it found itself within the administrative borders of Krakow. Therefore, the history of this town / district seems short and marked with few significant events. However, it has accelerated significantly in the period of the Nazi occupation in the years 1939–1945. The present perception of the history of the district centres around the tragic events of the Second World War, while the space of Podgórze is seen most of all as a realm of Polish-Jewish-German memory. Why? Since this very space

is defined by places which – as Cicero once suggested – "possess evocative power"[1]. Let me add that these memories are very specific and characterised by very particular qualities. Hence, following a distinction introduced by Aleida Assmann, I will address these places as traumatic places of memory.

[2] Reflecting on the relations between memory and history, the German scholar has distinguished two types of memory places: places of memory and places of trauma. Both types are characterised by a break of history.

> In contrast to places characterised by continuity, fixity of given traditions, and narratives or forms of life – Assmann writes – places of memory exemplify a lack of such continuity. In other words, there is a gap between the past and the present. […] Places filled with memories suggest discontinuity, for they store remnants of what has passed, yet can still be reactivated through memory.[2]

[3] According to Assmann, traumatic places differ from "ordinary" places of commemoration because of the emotional content that they impose on memory. Therefore, while in case of commemorative places we are dealing with affirmative memory and remembering meant to "make use of the past to make the present brighter", traumatic places resist this kind of interpretation of the past. "A place of trauma – Assmann writes – is characterised by the fact that telling its story requires the highest kind of effort, as well as overcoming biases and social taboos"[3].

[4] The paradoxical nature of the history of Podgórze that has been indicated in the opening paragraph consists in it (meaning history) being limited to the moment in time when continuity was broken. This break of history is, in fact, the very essence of the history of Podgórze. According to Assmann, such cracks give rise to places of memory. Podgórze served as the Krakow ghetto from 1941 to 1943, while from 1942 to 1945 it was a site of the Forced Labour Camp, later transformed into the Płaszów Concentration Camp, including the famous branch of Oskar Schindler's Enamel Factory. Due to their tragic history, Podgórze's places of memory have been gradually changing into traumatic places, while Podgórze itself is being transformed into a space of unhealed wound characterised by its very own topography.

> Here, broken history materialises in ruins and relics which stand out as foreign bodies and remnants of the past. Broken history is petrified in these remains and exists with no connection to the life of the local present which has moved on. What is more, it has learned to accept the relics of the past.[4]

---

[1] Cicero, *On Moral Ends*, ed. Julia Annas, trans. Raphael Woolf, Wiktor Kornatowski, Cambridge 2004, 118.

[2] Aleida Assmann, "Pamięć miejsc – autentyzm i upamiętnianie", trans. Justyna Górny, in: Aleida Assmann, *Między historią a pamięcią. Antologia*, ed. Magdalena Saryusz-Wolska, Warszawa 2013, 169.

[3] Assmann, "Pamięć miejsc – autentyzm i upamiętnianie", 174.

[4] Assmann, "Pamięć miejsc – autentyzm i upamiętnianie", 169.

[5]     The above-cited remarks could also be referred to the district of Krakow, where some relics (e.g. fragments of the ghetto wall) and ruins (e.g. of a Jewish funeral home in Jerozolimska Street) are, in fact, preserved.[5] They were and still are objects of collective forgetting (e.g. labour camps in Bieżanów and Prokocim, as well as branches of Płaszów Concentration Camp Julag II and Julag III),[6] as well as objects of numerous and diverse commemoration practices emerging throughout the postwar period. A list of those would include: ceremonial name-giving (e.g. the name of the Square of Concord [Plac Zgody] was changed into the Ghetto Heroes Square), bestowing museum status (e.g. the former buildings of the so-called Schindler's Factory were transformed in 2010 into the branch of the Historical Museum of the City of Krakow, Oskar Schindler's Enamel Factory, while the former "Pod Orłem" Pharmacy was changed into a museum in 1983), performative rituals of memory (e.g. the March of Memory organised annually every March in Podgórze to celebrate the anniversary of the closing of the ghetto), and finally – commemoration through monuments: both in traditional monumental form, as well as following more contemporary models of counter-monument, introduced in the second half of the 20th century.

[6]     In the following parts of this text, I will focus on the form of monumental and counter-monumental works that construct and sustain memory. My reflections on their form and meaning will critically address concepts introduced by those researchers whose writings on memory cultures and their changes after the Shoah have provided a significant counterpoint in the debate on monumental sculpture. Authors in question include: the already cited Aleida Assmann, Frank Ankersmit, who introduced several interesting and controversial theses in his *Remembering the Holocaust: Mourning and Melancholia*, a crucial text for the debate on the art of commemoration, as well as James E. Young – a scholar commonly considered a founder of the theoretical framework for the discussion of monuments and counter-monuments after the Shoah. My decision to choose these three scholars as my intellectual guides does not mean, however, that I do not draw from concepts introduced by other important theoreticians who address the issues of memory, postmemory, and trauma.[7]

[7]     The significance of monuments for memory studies is apparent on several levels. Firstly, it seems that monuments in public space are much more prone to interact with potential

---

[5] More on the history of the building, including its blowing up by the Nazis, as well as further degradation after the war in a comprehensive study by Barbara Zbroja. Cf. Barbara Zbroja, *Miasto umarłych. Architektura publiczna Żydowskiej Gminy Wyznaniowej w Krakowie w latach 1868–1939*, Kraków 2005, 89-103.

[6] The full name of the Płaszów camp was "Zwangsarbeitslager Plaszow des SS- und Polizeiführers im Distrikt Krakau", and from 1943: "Konzentrationslager Plaszow bei Krakau". "Julag" is short for "Judenarbeitslager".

[7] I mean here, above all, researchers whose concepts are close to Aleida Assmann's reflections, namely, Renate Lachmann, also a scholar from the Konstanz School, as well as Jan Assmann, whose notion of "communicative memory" will be consistently used throughout this text. I also remember about renowned scholars of trauma and postmemory and their works: Marianne Hirsch and her *The Generation of Postmemory. Writing and Visual Culture after the Holocaust*, Dominick LaCapra, and Michael Rothberg.

viewers on an everyday basis than museums (which can but do not have to be visited) or performative events related to memory culture, such as marches (in which one can but does not have to participate). The form of monuments and, above all, the way they are being perceived by passers-by, seem to reflect in the most accurate way the condition of collective and cultural memory, for, notably, monuments are elements that are the first to emerge in those places where, according to the intention of their authors, the memory of people or events is to be preserved.[8] Monuments are also the first to disappear, which is quite clear at the time of revolutions and sudden shifts of power, leaving behind nothing but empty plinths. Secondly, monuments are usually intended as art works (at least the ones I shall discuss were intended as such). Therefore, they can be used to analyse the links between the private / individual memory of an artist and the conventional – that is, stemming from the taste and style of the period – understanding of the structure of sculpture, sculpture and landscape, or sculpture and architecture. Thirdly, monuments, as formally structured messages etymologically related to remembering, require an addressee; whereas museums – homes to muses, treasuries, and mausoleums all in one[9] – are institutions focused on the distribution and storage of unintended traces.[10]

[8]    I will address the particular significance of monuments as forms of commemoration of traumatic places by discussing four monuments in Podgórze, created directly or indirectly in response to the moment of the break of history which characterises the history of the district. I will also consider how particular commemorative works use individual memory (of artists, designers, and witnesses of history whose private experience served as an artistic inspiration) to produce or attempt to produce long-term social memory.[11]

**Monumental metaphor: Płaszów monument by Witold Cęckiewicz**

[9]    The first commemorative work created in Podgórze was the Monument of the Victims of Fascism, also known in Krakow as "the monument of the torn hearts", unveiled in September 1964 (Fig. 1). This nine-metre-high structure, a monumental, or even gargantuan project, as James E. Young described it,[12] was designed in 1962 by Witold Cęckiewicz and erected from 1962 to 1963 by the sculptor Ryszard Szczypczyński from the Karsy limestone. The monument, located on the site of the former Płaszów Concentration Camp, was a part of a larger project that included sculptural elements and landscape design and meant as the main element and setting for the celebratory rituals

---

[8] Such as roadside crosses for victims of car accidents placed by individuals as acts of private mourning.

[9] Cf. Theodor W. Adorno, "Valéry Proust Museum", trans. Samuel and Shierry Weber, in: Theodor W. Adorno, *Prisms*, Cambridge MA 1997, 173.

[10] Cf. Aleida Assmann, "Canon and Archive", in: *Companion to Cultural Memory Studies*, eds. Astrid Erill, Ansgar Nünning, Berlin 2008, 98–99.

[11] I use this notion after Assmann. Cf. Aleida Assmann, "Cztery formy pamięci", trans. Karolina Sidowska, in: Assmann, *Między historią a pamięcią*, 55.

[12] James E. Young, *The Texture of Memory: Holocaust Memorials and Meaning*, New Haven and London 1993, 189.

of memory related to the twenty-fifth anniversary of the outbreak of the Second World War. Its monumentality was emphasised by its location on top of a hexagonal earthwork constructed from 1855 to 1856 as a part of the fortifications of the Krakow Fortress (marked with the symbol FS-22, Fig. 2). Included by the Nazis within the framework of the Płaszów camp, the earthwork was used as one of two sites of mass executions of prisoners and as a mass grave described in literature as C-Dołek [C-Hole]. This spatial and historical context indicates that the location of the monument was to commemorate the traumatic place of memory, or even to construct it as such. What means and what forms were used to sustain and construct this memory?



1 The Monument of the Victims of Fascism, Kraków-Płaszów,
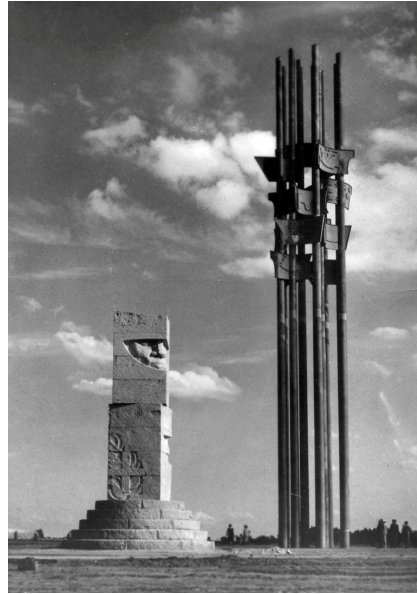photo: the archive of Witold Cęckiewicz
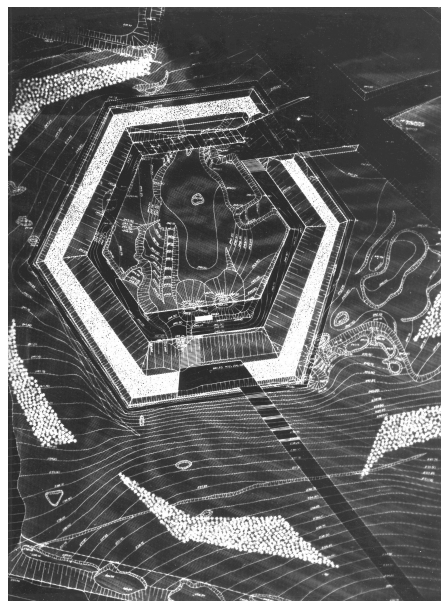


2 The plan of earthwork FS-22 with the location of sculpture-and-landscape
structure, Kraków-Płaszów, photo: the archive of Witold Cęckiewicz

[10]     James E. Young analyses the monument in Płaszów in reference to two contexts. Firstly, he states that the monument commemorates the victims of the Shoah. Secondly, in the seventh chapter titled "Broken tablets and Jewish Memory", he notices in it abstract and figurative motifs, popular in postwar Poland, which can be found in other works commemorating the Shoah, such as the monument in Treblinka by Adam Haupt, Franciszek Duszeńka and Franciszek Strynkiewicz, unveiled also in 1964. According to Young, the symbolic gash, the break in the five stone figures, needs to be read in the context of stone memorials, constructed in the postwar period from the fragments of *matzevoth* (headstones) destroyed by the Nazis during the war. The technique is supposed to have its direct source in the ancient Jewish funerary images.[13]

[11]     This formal and, admittedly, rather superficial analysis is hardly convincing.[14] As far as analogous monuments in Polish art of the 1960s are concerned, the monument of the Grunwald Victory (Fig. 3) is formally much closer to the Płaszów monument than the one in Treblinka. The Grunwald monument was designed by Cęckiewicz only two years before he conceived the concept for the Płaszów monument[15].

[12]     The monumental structure in Grunwald employs a repertory of visual means that are strikingly similar to the ones used in Płaszów. They include: a viewing axis with wide stone stairs gently climbing a hill and leading to the stone monument; positioning the sculpture in the landscape so that it is seen on the horizon as located between the ground and the sky; the use of the plan of amphitheatre (offering a view to the plan of the site of the battle of Grunwald [the first battle of Tannenberg] and to the view of the reverse of the monument in Płaszów, Figs. 4, 5); the use of stone mourners inscribed in the geometric shape of the murdered figures in Płaszów and the so-called knights' obelisk in Grunwald.

---

[13] Young, *The Texture of Memory*, 189. I have to note here on a kind of carelessness of the author, who writes about six (!) mourning figures, while the monument contains only five synthetically presented figures, which is quite clear in the photograph that Young includes in his book. Young also makes a mistake when writing the name of the sculptor as "Szczypczyski". Cf. Young, *The Texture of Memory*, 193.

[14] During a conversation I had with Witold Cęckiewicz, whom I approached searching for information for the present article in June 2014, the author discussed motifs he had in mind when working on the monument. They were significantly different from the ones mentioned by Young. Cęckiewicz, aware of the tradition of monuments made from parts of Jewish tombstones in Polish landscape sculpture after 1945, claimed to have been inspired by an image of a torn sheet of paper and an image of a human figure slashed with a series of bullets from a machine gun. According to him, from the side, the monument was meant to recall a massive white bone protruding from the ground. The number of figures that Young counted wrongly was also important: it symbolised five, not six, nationalities of the victims of the camp (according to the knowledge in the early 1960s). I would like to offer my deep gratitude to Professor Cęckiewicz for these and many other valuable details about his monumental sculpture.

[15] The concept for the monument was conceived in 1959, while the monuments together with the battleground arrangement were constructed from 1959 to 1960 and unveiled on the occasion of the 550th anniversary of the battle.

3 The Monument of the Grunwald Victory, Grunwald,
photo: the archive of Witold Cęckiewicz



4 The Monument of the Grunwald Victory, Grunwald, photo: the
archive of Witold Cęckiewicz



5 The Monument of the Victims of Fascism, Kraków-Płaszów,
photo: Wojciech Szymański

[13]     These two monuments are so similar that one needs to agree with Assmann, who claims that:

> The memory of martyrs or battlefields is no less normative than the intellectual memory of spiritual greatness. The normative power radiates most of all from places that witnessed admirable [Grunwald] or unprecedentedly tragic events [Płaszów].[16]

[14]     In the light of the above, it is clear that the Płaszów monument is a kind of reversal of the Grunwald piece. Grunwald monument employs a monument-in-the-landscape type of arrangement to construct an affirmative site of commemoration, while the Płaszów monument addresses the place of trauma with the use of exactly the same set of forms. What the two have in common is the German occupant: in the former case dressed in the white coat with a black cross, in the latter – wearing the SS uniform. What are the consequences of the choice of such sculptural form in this particular place of memory?

[15]     To answer this question I shall refer to two classic theoretical propositions about monuments formulated by Assmann and Ankersmit – researchers working in the field of memory studies and, significantly, theoreticians of history. Addressing the issues of institutional and national commemorating and the problem of the monument as the form of normative imperative, Assmann points out that "one needs to understand what a monument is allowed and what it is not allowed to do"[17]. Most emphatically, a monument is:

> […] a cultural text written with a very restrictive code of visual symbols. This code does not allow for a formulation of complex content and diversified messages. The task of monuments lies elsewhere: they provide assurance about identity and transmit simple messages. When the rhetoric that invests them with meaning fades, monuments will still be offering a performative metatext: you shall not forget! Each and every monument is an embodiment of this categorical imperative.[18]

[16]     Ankersmit, on the other hand, locates monuments in the metonymic discourse of memory contrasted with the metaphoric discourse of history. Ankersmit sees the metonymic, and hence indexical, register of monuments as a more appropriate tool for commemoration than metaphoric historical writing, which is referential and appropriating:

> The discourse of memory is 'indexical', it points to or indicates the past, it encircles the past – but without ever attempting to penetrate into it. […] Metonymy favours mere contiguity, respects all the unpredictable contingencies of our memories, and is, as such, the very opposite of the proud metaphorical appropriation of reality. […] Metonymy ties together a web of associations depending upon our personal experiences and a host of contingent factors, instead of forcing (past) reality within the matrices of a metaphorical appropriation of

---

[16] Assmann, "Pamięć miejsc – autentyzm i upamiętnianie", 174.

[17] Aleida Assmann, "Do czego potrzebne jest 'narodowe upamiętnianie'?", trans. Agata Teperek, in: Assmann, *Między historią a pamięcią*, 196.

[18] Assmann, "Do czego potrzebne jest 'narodowe upamiętnianie'?", 196-197.

> reality. […] The essentially indexical nature of memory – and where memory should be contrasted to the referentiality of history – is most clearly expressed by the monument. The monument does not tell us something about the past, in the way that the (metaphorical) historical text does, but functions rather like a (metonymical) signpost. Put differently, the monument functions like an index: it requires us to look in a certain direction without specifying what we shall ultimately find in that direction.[19]

[17]   The problematic nature of the Płaszów monument rests in the fact that it is not, as Assmann would expect it, written with "very restrictive code of visual symbols", nor is it, as Ankersmit defines all kinds of monuments, an indexical object with the structure of a metonymy. This particular monument has its reverse – a flat huge plate with an inscription that can hardly be interpreted, as Young suggested, as following the Jewish visual tradition of the motif of a broken *matzevoth*[20]. As Ankersmit suggests, this inscription, just like any other text, provides a name, being at the same time a metaphorical historical text. It is metaphorical and thus non-metonymic and non-symbolic (as Assmann understands it) and it runs as follows: "In homage to the martyrs murdered as a result of Nazi genocide in the years 1943–1945" (Fig. 6).



6 The Monument of the Victims of Fascism, Kraków-Płaszów,
photo: Wojciech Szymański

[18]   What else if not a metaphor is used in the phrase "martyrs"? Ankersmit explains the reasons and the goals of using metaphors in historical texts in the following way:

---

[19] Frank Ankersmit, "Remembering the Holocaust: Mourning and Melancholy", in: Frank Ankersmit, *Historical Representation*, Stanford CA 2001, 178-179.

[20] According to Cęckiewicz, the text of the inscription on the reverse of the monument comes entirely from the commissioners. It is, then, earlier that the concept for the sculptural form of the monument. Noteworthy, the large scale of the inscription on the reverse matches the artist's concept which intended the figures to recall a torn piece of paper (information from an unpublished conversation with Cęckiewicz, June 2014).

> The historian typically realizes this aim [describing and explaining the past] by reducing what was initially strange, alien, and incomprehensible in the past to what was known to us already; that is, by showing what was strange in terms of what is already understood. This is what makes historical writing essentially metaphorical. Think […] of the example of the Enlightenment: we are all acquainted with the reality of a room that is suddenly illuminated by a lamp or a candle. And we are then invited to relate the realities of eighteenth-century thought to that reality in a meaningful way. In this sense we can assert that metaphor is the foundation of historical writing and the source of its essential aesthetic properties.[21]

[19]　What is problematic here is not only the metaphorical nature of the inscription on the monument, but also the fact that its ideological provenance is to be found in the strictly religious register and Christian imagery.[22] The metaphor used in it seems to ignore that most of the martyrs in question were Jewish. To some extent this problematic nature is explained by Young, who writes:

> If the surrounding population is Polish and Christian, then so will be much of the memory here, whether we like it or not. Polish Catholics will remember as Polish Catholics, even when they remember Jewish victims. As Jews recall events in the figures of their tradition, so will Poles remember in the forms of their faith.[23]

[20]　I suggest that the inscription installed on the Płaszów monument leads to two important conclusions. Firstly, contrary to what Ankersmit argues, not all monuments are exclusively indexical and metonymic. Secondly, they are not as restrictively symbolic as Assmann suggests. In other words, monuments are often highly metaphorical: they do more than just provide an index and an imperative "remember!". More importantly, they also show how to remember. The Płaszów monument points to the Płaszów Concentration Camp, yet if one wanted to treat it as a "signpost" on the way to the bottomless well of the past, one would notice that it does not lead to Jewish victims, but to Christians, who were given both the victor's palm, so to speak, and the martyr's palm.[24]

---

[21] Ankersmit, "Remembering the Holocaust", 177. In the Polish version of this text, Ankersmit used a different metaphor to illustrate his argument. He wrote about Jesus metaphorically referring to himself as the good shepherd, thus explaining his mission in well-known categories. Cf. Frank Ankersmit, "Pamiętając Holocaust: żałoba i melancholia", trans. Andrzej Ajschtet, Andrzej Kubis, Joanna Regulska, in: *Pamięć, etyka i historia. Anglo-amerykańska teoria historiografii lat dziewięćdziesiątych*, ed. Ewa Domańska, Poznań 2006, 166.

[22] The notion of martyrdom appears not only in various forms of Christianity, but also in Judaism and Islam. Nonetheless, the Shoah cannot be understood through this category, for a martyr, as the Greek and Latin etymology suggests, is a witness, a person who has a choice to avoid death by changing their beliefs and renouncing their faith, yet remains a witness to it and dies for it. While undoubtedly there existed non-Jewish victims of the Nazis who were also martyrs (such as the Saint Maximilian Kolbe), it would be highly risky to argue that there were also Jewish martyrs. Jewish victims had no option, after all, to die having made testimony to their faith. There are, however, singular and individual cases, such as the figure of Marc Bloch, who could have probably survived the occupation, yet he died as a member of the French resistance. Cf. Marc Bloch, *Strange Defeat*, trans. Gerard Hopkins, New York 1968, 32-46.

[23] Young, *The Texture of Memory*, 116-117.

[24] The celebration of the unveiling of the Płaszów monument on September 3, 1964 was one of the elements of Krakow's celebration of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the outbreak of the Second World War. The press commented on the fact that in Płaszów "the Nazis started a large concentration camp and bestially murdered over 70 thousand people of various nationalities, mainly Jewish", and that the monument "was erected by joined initiative of CFOS, the Council for

### Counter-monumental metonymy: chairs from the Ghetto Heroes Square

[21] Two aspects of monuments seem to be of paramount importance in case of three other forms of commemoration, which emerged in Podgórze in the early 21st century. These are: firstly, the categorical imperative "you must not forget!", seen by Assmann as the task shared by all monuments and deprived – like all imperatives – of any hint at "how" to remember, but merely imposing an order "to" remember, and, secondly, the indexical aspect of monuments. These works refer directly or indirectly to the German tradition of counter-monuments, discussed by Young, a tradition whose origins date back to the second half of the 1980s. The emergence of this form of commemoration coincided with yet another great historical debate of the German academic circles and the media, as well as with the famous speech by Richard von Weizsäcker, given on the occasion of the fortieth anniversary of the end of the Second World War.[25]

[22] I would like to start my discussion of the three public works in Podgórze that I mentioned above with an interpretation of the monument on the Ghetto Heroes Square, designed by Piotr Lewicki and Kazimierz Łatak in 2003 and erected in 2005 (Fig. 7). The group of several dozen empty chairs, made of bronze and installed on the pavement of the Square, was created according to the project that won the competition for the concept of the spatial arrangement of the Square, announced by the municipality of Krakow in 2003. Noteworthy, the important rule of the competition included in the regulations, was the construction of a place of memory. The monument that Lewicki and Łatak proposed is not only the first work in Podgórze that commemorates Krakow's Jewish population, but also, interestingly, it fulfils Young's formal requirements for a counter-monument.

---

the Protection of Monuments of War Struggle and Martyrdom, the President of the Municipal Council of Krakow and the Social and Cultural Association of Polish Jews", yet what was most emphasised was that the monument, "containing the symbols of a life cut short, was positively received by the Krakow public, who see it as commemorating all those murdered by the Nazis. One of the walls contains an inscription: In homage of all the martyrs murdered by the Nazis from 1943 to 1945". What is striking is the discourse of the "civil" reading of war crimes, typical for the 1960s, and the lack of mention of the Jewish victims of the Shoah. It is very clear especially in the mistake made by a press article, where the need to emphasise that "all" were being murdered led to adding the word "all" to the quoted monument inscription, while there is no such word on the monument's reverse. What is being expressed is the need to construct an anti-German memory, rather than the memory of "all" victims. The report ends as follows: "At the end of yesterday's celebrations, which turned into a major anti-war manifestation, the gathered crowed accepted a resolution to condemn the Nazi crimes as well as the forces of reaction and Fascism, revived recently in West Germany. The thudding of the drum accompanied the act of laying hundreds of flowers at the monument", in: *Dziennik Polski*, 4 IX 1964, 210 (6402), 1-2. This anti-German tone, typical for the 1960s, is not just a Polish phenomenon. It can also be found in the French public discourse and it is related to the 1964 declaration of the government of West Germany, according to which on May 8, 1965, that is, twenty years after the end of the war, all war crimes were to fall under the statute of limitations. This made the French government pass a bill on the prosecution of genocide having no expiry date. The declaration of the German government inspired Vladimir Jankélévitch to write his famous *L'impresciptible*, cf. Jankélévitch, *L'impresciptible: Pardonner? Dans l'honneur et la dignité*, Paris 1986, 67.

[25] Cf. Anna Wolff-Powęska, *Pamięć – brzemię i uwolnienie. Niemcy wobec nazistowskiej przeszłości (1945-2010)*, Poznań 2010, 433-441.

7 Chairs on the Ghetto Heroes Square, Kraków-Podgórze,
photo: Wojciech Szymański

[23]  In reference to this concept, Ankersmit writes:

> The monument is, in the end, a work of art, and is granted the same broad range
> of self-presentation that we grant the work of art. The monument may, therefore,
> be just anything between the work of art that wholly absorbs our attention at the
> cost of the represented and the counter-monument […] that effaces itself
> completely by its wish to be nothing but a mere index or signpost.[26]

[24]  Admittedly, Ankersmit writes about classic counter-monuments, yet, in my opinion, the
work in Podgórze can be seen as a part of this trend. I will try to show that the chairs
from the Square refer to this tradition most of all through their structure.

[25]  Young traces the development of counter-monumentalism on the example of structures
that are nowadays considered classic counter-monuments, including such works as: *The
Monuments Against Fascism* in Hamburg (1986) by Jochen Gerz and Esther Shalev-Gerz,
*Black Form Dedicated to the Missing Jews* from Münster (1987) by Sol LeWitt, the
negative form of the fountain of Aschrotts in Kassel (1987) by Horst Hoheisel, the Berlin
*Library* (1996) by Micha Ullman or the *Holocaust Memorial* on Judenplatz in Vienna
(1997) by Rachel Whiteread[27]. According to Young, theoretical frameworks of these works
include: the "brazen, painfully self-conscious" awareness of their own limitations;
accusations made against the conventional monuments that they separate awareness
from memory; a similar protest against their habit of constructing one, official, "facile"
version of memory; and abstaining from any claims to speak in the name of a collective
social subject. Finally, which is perhaps most important from the point of view of my
reflections on sculptural form, counter-monuments refuse to employ a monumental form,
viewed as a form abused by totalitarian regimes of the 20th century, which means that
they refuse to place the monument on a pedestal, as well as to employ portraits or

---

[26] Ankersmit, "Remembering the Holocaust", 179.

[27] Cf. Young, *The Texture of Memory*, 17-48, and James E. Young, *At Memory's Edge: After-Images
of the Holocaust in Contemporary Art and Architecture*, New Haven and London 2000, 90-151.

allegories as means of representation. The shift from conventional sculptural representation towards other forms is explained in terms of a protest against the didacticism of a traditional monument, with its contemplative form and its positioning of the viewer in a typically passive, receptive role[28]. The thus construed trend of counter-monumentalism has produced a wide array of tropes used by artists in their work, and has led to the emergence of features that can perhaps be referred to as stylistic indicators of counter-monumentalism as a movement. Those would include: dematerialisation and ephemerality, the literal disappearance of the monument (the case of Gerzs' work in Hamburg), the use of negative sculptural form (fountain in Kassel, Whiteread's works, the 2005 monument of the ruined synagogue in Regensburg by Dani Karavan, Ullman's *Library* in Berlin), the lack of representation in favour of non-representability or marks of emptiness and lack (the majority of works), as well as making the works barely visible or barely recognisable as works of art (*The Invisible Monument* in Saarbrücken by Jochen Gerz from 1997).

[26]    The chairs of Podgórze can certainly be seen as part of this tradition. Their most characteristic feature is avoiding representation, or even non-representability. This stems from the fact that the chair used as a motif is not a subject of the discussed monument, but only a means used to present the lack and emptiness after the murdered Jews of Krakow, who were sent from the very site of the monument to the death camps. This work uses also a form characteristic for counter-monumentalism, namely, the negative of reality: the cast of "real" chairs. These negative chairs are positioned on the verge of visibility as an intended work of art, which means that they can but do not have to be recognised as a sculptural monument. In other words, the chairs seem to be somewhere between a monument that is automatically recognised as a work of art and an element of public space with no artistic ambitions.

[27]    The monument in Podgórze, however, is not a consistent work in the trend of counter-monumentalism, for it employs a set of traditional sculptural elements. The material, bronze, the enlarged negatives of chairs, much larger than the real "positives", as well as the use of plinths in the form of bronze pedestals, are elements that draw directly from traditional monumental forms. What is perhaps the most interesting aspect of this work, however, is that its form – a combination of elements of a traditional monument and a counter-monument – was developed by its makers on the basis of individual memory of an exceptional witness of history. This witness, Tadeusz Pankiewicz, ran "Pod Orłem" Pharmacy in the Krakow ghetto and described his experience in a memoir published under the title *The Krakow Ghetto Pharmacy*.

[28]    Pankiewicz's book includes a description of the Square after the final deportation of the people from the ghetto:

---

[28] Young, *The Texture of Memory*, 27-28.

> On Zgoda Square there was a decaying stack of abandoned wardrobes, tables, dressers and other furniture which had been moved from one place to another again and again.

[29] And further on:

> […] the Jewish workers were given just two hours to clear out the furniture from an entire building, a simply impossible task. And yet it was done under the personal supervision of Ritschek, who, in apparent display of enthusiasm, told them to throw the furniture from the upper windows. Tables, wardrobes and beds fell and shattered noisily on the cobbles below.[29]

[30] The authors of the monument found in this testimony a poignant image of absence that the monument is supposed to evoke. Pankiewicz's memories, used as an inspiration, problematise the status of the witness of history and Polish memory of the period of the Nazi occupation, which makes this work different from the monument in Płaszów. Hence, not "all the martyrs" murdered by the Nazis are the subject of mourning here. The space from which the Krakow Jews were deported becomes a place of memory, while the contemporary viewers of the monument become – through the visual repetition of the testimony of the only non-Jewish witness of the event (that is, Pankiewicz) – witnesses of the Shoah. For many viewers – who are expected to remember, as Assmann argued – this status is both uncomfortable and incomprehensible. The lack of understanding of the message of the monument by Polish viewers is proved by titles of articles that were published in Krakow press at the turn of 2004 and 2005: "Mysterious chairs puzzle viewers", "Local council against the chairs", "Square, not a graveyard", "Chairs of contention", "Less chairs, more trees"[30]. The question arises: why did the first Holocaust memorial in Krakow provoke so many controversies and misunderstandings?

[31] I think that one might risk a statement that potential viewers, who through the sculptural repetition of Pankiewicz's literary testimony became witnesses of the Shoah,[31] did not recognise in the chairs the structure of the monument, for the bronze, the scale, and the low plinth is not enough to consider something a monument. Indeed, a monument "may be just anything", as Ankersmit argued, yet the example of the chairs shows that a monument is not always seen as a work of art. However, the identification of the chairs was made possible by representatives of the local media, who immediately took to explaining the authors' intentions.

---

[29] Tadeusz Pankiewicz, *The Krakow Ghetto Pharmacy*, Kraków 2013, 297.

[30] Published in the following: *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 20-21 July 2008; *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 30 January 2004; *Dziennik Polski*, 8 January 2004; *Dziennik Polski*, 21 December 2003; *Dziennik Polski*, 16 November 2004.

[31] This is the most important difference between the monument in Płaszów and the chairs in Podgórze. In case of the former, the metaphorical inscription positions the potential viewers as survivors or their descendants who pay homage to the murdered martyrs. In case of the latter, there takes place a shift of the status of the viewers: from survivors they turn into witnesses of the Shoah. Of course, this leads to serious ontological and ethical consequences, which will be addressed in a separate essay.

[32]     One might also assume that the chairs standing on the pavement of the city square did seem out of place; after all, they should have been placed inside a building. The sense of being out of place transfers one into the register of the Freudian category of the uncanny – *das Unheimliche*.[32] This category, as the father of psychoanalysis argued, is difficult to rationalise, as well as to neutralise.

[33]     Finally, what seems interesting is the moment when the chairs, initially unidentified as a place of memory, turn into a monument. When they are being recognised as such, there takes place an immediate shift of the ontological status of the one who recognises, who then becomes a witness of the Shoah. The empty chair is then a symbol of the Shoah, while the city square becomes a traumatic place. Yet, the memory of it requires, to recall Assmann's statement: "the highest kind of effort, as well as overcoming biases and social taboos". This work makes the potential viewers embody Pankiewicz's individual memory, which transforms this way into social memory.[33] Yet, it proves impossible to repress this wound or to give up the status of the witness. It may be useful here to quote Ludwig Wittgenstein's remarks on recognition and memory. Wittgenstein argues:

> Does everything that we do not find conspicuous make an impression of inconspicuousness? Does what is ordinary always make the *impression* of ordinariness? When I talk about this table do I *remember* that this object is called a 'table'? […] It is easy to misconceive what is called 'recognising'; as if recognising always consisted in comparing two impressions with one another. It is as if I carried a picture of an object with me and used it to identify an object as the one represented by the picture. Our memory seems to us to be the agent of such a comparison, by preserving a picture of what has been seen before, or by allowing us to look into the past (as if down a spyglass). Indeed, it is not so much as if I were comparing the object with a picture set beside it, but as if the object *coincided* with the picture. So I see only one thing, not two[34].

[34]     Thanks to the authors' use of Pankiewicz's testimony, the chairs from the Ghetto Heroes Square allow one to see the past "as if down a spyglass". More importantly, perhaps, they also bring this past back, so that now it takes place as the present.

## Counter-monument for Julian Aleksandrowicz: *10 cubic metres of Krakow wintertime air* by Łukasz Skąpski

[35]     Łukasz Skąpski's work titled *10 cubic metres of Krakow wintertime air* (Fig. 8), no longer present in public space, can be seen as an unambiguous example of a counter-monument. Located from June 2013 on the verge of the Square, on a meadow, next to

---

[32] This interpretation was proposed by Tomasz Łysak in his illuminating text. Cf. Tomasz Łysak, "Bezdomne meble – o pomniku na Placu Bohaterów Getta w Krakowie", in: *Obieg*, http://www.obieg.pl/recenzje/1908 (accessed: 1 April 2014).

[33] The aspect of embodiment is the most important one for this work. The chairs can be easily sat on, which function is rarely used by local residents, and more often by tourists. This corporal aspect can also be quite problematic, for one can move from the position of the witness to an unrightfully taken position of the victim. I would like to thank Dr. Luiza Nader for pointing this out to me.

[34] Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, trans. G.E.M. Anscombe, P.M.S. Hacker, Joachim Schulte, Chichester 2009, 165-166.

Powstańców Śląskich Bridge, it provoked consternation even greater than the already discussed chairs. The white metal cube was designed by the artist as a typical container of non-standard measurements.[35] The work can be read on two levels. Firstly, following the hint provided by the title, one can contend that the artist intended to draw attention to the perhaps biggest current problem of Podgórze and Krakow at large, namely, the pollution of the air, which troubles the city's inhabitants especially in winter. The container was filled by the artist with winter air and then sealed. Secondly, the installation was dedicated to Professor Julian Aleksandrowicz, becoming this way a kind of memorial for the Podgórze-born doctor and philosopher, the pioneer of ecology in Poland. Significantly, Aleksandrowicz was imprisoned in the Krakow ghetto during the war.[36]



8 Łukasz Skąpski, *10 cubic metres of Krakow wintertime air*,
photo: Wojciech Szymański

[36]   Skąpski decided to dedicate his work to Aleksandrowicz, pointing to the fact that even though there exists a monument for the Krakow Jews as a collective subject (the afore-mentioned chairs), yet there is no memorial for any individual Jew.[37] In this sense, Skąpski's work became a work on memory, which aimed at an individual, not collective, commemoration. Designing his monument, Skąpski made use of his personal memories of the figure of the doctor-philosopher: the memory of Aleksandrowicz's book titled *Sumienie ekologiczne* [*The Ecological Conscience*], a popular work in the 1970s that he had read as a young man, as well as his memory of dolomite pills that he had swallowed as a child. The pills had been promoted by Aleksandrowicz – a professional haematologist and an unconventional medic – as a treatment aimed at cleansing of the organism.

---

[35] Skąpski's container measured: 2,3 in height, 4,65 in length and 0,92 in width.

[36] Aleksandrowicz's biography and his outlook on medicine and health have been well reconstructed by Krystyna Rożnowska. Her book, devoid of original conclusions, provides however a useful overview and numerous details of the Professor's life in Podgórze. Cf. Krystyna Rożnowska, *Uleczyć świat. O Julianie Aleksandrowiczu*, Kraków 2012.

[37] As it seems, the artist had in mind an individual, three-dimensional monument, for Krakow is not completely devoid of memorial plates for individual Krakow Jews. See for example a plate commemorating Mordechaj Gebirtig in Berka Joselewicza Street.

[37]     The form of this monument, inspired with social issues and the artist's individual memory, made references both to the tradition of Minimalism and to the idea of counter-monument. This sculpture in the expanded field, to use a term coined by Rosalind Krauss, did not represent anything and was even more difficult to recognise as an art work than the nearby chairs. Moreover, it did not demand the kind of identification which leads to the emergence of a collective place of memory. Formally close to Sol LeWitt's *Black Form* (Fig. 9), with the shape that was strikingly unfitting to its surroundings, it was almost welcoming acts of vandalism and pseudo-literary activity (tagging, spraying). Similarly treated were LeWitt's sculpture and the Hamburg counter-monument by the Gerzs.[38]



9 Sol LeWitt, *Black Form: Memorial to the Missing Jews*,
version from Altona, photo: Tanji Nierhaus

[38]     This uncommon monument proved to be a probe that examined the condition of memory in Podgórze. Notably, it disappeared from the landscape of the district[39] just like the

---

[38] In the course of one year of its existence in Podgórze's public space, on numerous occasions Skąpski's work was subjected to acts of vandalism, as well as to relatively more friendly acts of marking, such as tags that appeared all over its surface. Both the former and the latter forms were in accordance with the artist's intentions. They were also used by the work's adversaries as an argument in favour of its removal.

[39] According to the initial decision of the authorities, Skąpski's work was meant as a temporary installation and was allowed to occupy the area within the district only until the end of June 2014. My attempts (as the work's curator) to prolong this period met with lack of understanding and hostility on the part of the district's council members, who appealed to the Mayor to remove it from the square with immediate effect. The local media took interest in the matter and, much in the vein of the contention over the bronze chairs, a public debate commenced, with the participation of the same council members who protested against the chairs. See for example: Julita Kwaśniak, "Biały kontener w Podgórzu, czyli jak rozpoznać pomnik", in: *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 24 April 2014, http://krakow.gazeta.pl/krakow/1,44425,15845460,Bialy_kontener_w_Podgorzu__czyli_jak_rozpoznac_pomnik.html (accessed 24 April 2014); "Na kamieniu pamięci zbudować już się nie da. Rozmowa z dr. Wojciechem Szymańskim", in: *Gazeta Wyborcza. Magazyn Krakowski*, 25 April 2014, 8-11; Wojciech Szymański, "Sztuka ignorowania sztuki", in: *Gazeta Wyborcza. Kraków*, 2-4

counter-monuments I have mentioned above. However, it did not disappear in a manner reminiscent of the counter-monument in Hamburg, which embraced disappearance as its formal goal, but in a way that followed the lot of the formally similar work by LeWitt. His *Black Form*, erected in Münster within the framework of Skulptur Projekte 87 (Skąpski's work was also commissioned by a festival of art in public space – the fifth edition of ArtBoom Festival), was removed from the university square one year later at the request of the city authorities. The arguments were as follows: firstly, the sculpture occupied the space that could be used as a car park (identical arguments were voiced against the placement of chairs in Krakow in 2004); secondly, it did not fit with the historic surroundings of the square. Interestingly enough, the same arguments were given by the district council, who called for the removal of the memorial for Aleksandrowicz. Writing about the history of the reception of LeWitt's work, Young concluded that after its removal, "absent people would now be commemorated by an absent monument"[40].

**The knell for the monument: *Purification* by Mateusz Okoński**

[39]     Further away from the Square, outside of the district itself, in-between Podgórze and Kazimierz districts, lies *Purification* (2010–2012) (Figs. 10, 11), a sculpture placed on a concrete casing of "Wanda" artesian well, made by a young (born in 1985), Krakow-based artist, Mateusz Okoński.



10 Mateusz Okoński, *Purification*, Krakow, photo: courtesy of the artist

---

May 2014, 4.

[40] Young, *The Texture of Memory*, 18. It is difficult not to notice that the anti-Semitic arguments are ahistorical and it does not matter whether they are used as a hammer in Germany twenty years ago, or in Podgórze right in front of our eyes. Two elements do not change: anti-Semitism and arguments used as its alibi, namely that given sculpture does not fit the surroundings.

11 Mateusz Okoński, *Purification*, Krakow, photo: courtesy of the artist

[40]     Statue-like and apparently following the traditional sculptural convention, made of white marble and resin, the sculpture presents a corpse of a pig placed on a stake. This site-specific work, very complex and filled with references to Krakow as a place of memory, becomes comprehensible, once one starts analysing its extensive structure and semantic scope. Soon enough, one realises that the produced narrative, though seemingly reasonable and coherent, is based on multiplication and constant development of more and more stories related to Krakow and Podgórze. A reference follows a reference, as if the entire city had a structure of *mise en abyme*. One might lead this narrative *ad infinitum*, like a speech of a madman or a person who believes in a pansemiotic world. One might be fortunate enough to stop and burst out with a nervous laughter. A laughter that would signify the recognition of Okoński's work as a satire on all forms of monumental construction of meaning and a knell for the idea of the monument in general. Let me, then, try out the speech of an educated fool:

> *Purification* is a symbolic splinter stuck into our pig bodies. For Okoński – just like myself – is a pig, since he was born a Pole. *Purification* is an act of sacrifice; a sacrifice of the corpse of Wanda thrown on the bank of Vistula River disguised as a pig, whose gravity (marble) does not let it sail away quietly towards Mogiła.[41] A bridge on the left, a bridge on the right, and Vistula in the middle. In the spot where Okoński's sculpture is placed, Vistula passes two towns: Kazimierz and Podgórze[42]. The closest bridge that links the two banks and towns is the Krakus

[41] Mogiła – a village near Krakow, since 1951 within its administrative borders. Its name refers to the story of Wanda, a daughter of Krak, the legendary founder of Krakow, invented most probably by Wincenty Kadłubek. Wanda "did not want the German" as a husband and according to the most popular version of the story, she committed suicide by jumping to the Vistula to avoid being married to "a tyrant", i.e. the German prince Rytygier. Wanda's body was found in the river by the inhabitants of Mogiła, where she was buried and where she was commemorated with a large, over a dozen-metre-high mound, still in existence.

[42] Kazimierz was founded as a separate city in 1335 by Casimir the Great. In the late 15th century the king Jan Olbracht ordered the construction of *oppidum iudaeorum* where the entire Jewish population was deported from Krakow. The deportations took place in 1495, after the pogrom of 1494, when Jews were drowned in the river. This way, the "old" Jewish district was created, which

> Bridge, today the Powstańców Śląskich Bridge, which the Jewish population was forced to cross from Krakow to their new home in Podgórze.[43] Ghetto on the left, ghetto on the right, and Wanda flowing in-between. Everything flows. The wave of Vistula washes the marble pig and brings the reflection of Wawel and Skałka,[44] two pig necropoles, to travel several hundred metres and mix with pigs' blood flowing through the discharge canal of the slaughter-house transformed into a shopping mall.[45] In Okoński's *Purification* cleansing takes place permanently thanks to Vistula's current and, at the same time, paradoxically, through the geography of the place, its location between two marked banks and parts of the river; it never happens and will never happen. For in the place where *Scamander River shines with the wave of Vistula*[46] Wanda, the one who did not want the Jew, is materialised again and again.[47]

[41] Here I could stop this pansemiotic enumeration or I could go on infinitely. It will not, however, change the already quite well explicated fact that this peculiar counter-monument is a work that thematises all kinds of monuments and places of commemoration, including the traumatic ones. It also provides a caricature of the art of commemoration as such. Significantly, even though the title of this work makes a reference to Vladimir Jankélévitch's category of spiritual purification, the sculpture itself does not represent purification, but the act of the holocaust. It is an act of physical cleansing that the French author calls *épuration physique.*[48] The combination of two elements in one work, namely, fire and water, as well as the caricatural mixture of categories, make the titular purification happen always and never.

[42] What we are dealing with here is, perhaps, a different form of memory altogether, one which was absent from the previously discussed works. I suggest that it could be read as a form of affective memory, coming to life at the very moment when the viewer bursts out laughing, provoked by his or her analysis of *Purification* and the following recognition of the caricatural nature of the order of historical reality. Freud describes this caricatural nature as hysteria. Ankersmit, on the other hand, links it with monuments, postulating the need for neurotic memory.[49] Perhaps this caricature of the monument, subverting Krakow's past in its entirety – its history and memory – is also a form of generational

---

until the end of the 18th century was separated from Krakow and the remaining part of Kazimierz with a wall and fences. During the Second World War, the Nazis deported a part of its population to Podgórze, while the remaining part was sent directly to the labour camps and the death camps.

[43] The Krakow ghetto, Der jüdische Wohnbezirk in Krakau – Żydowska dzielnica mieszkaniowa w Krakowie, קראָקעווער געטאָ – Krokewer geto existed in Podgórza from 1941 to 1943.

[44] The Wawel Cathedral and the Crypt of the Just in Skałka, the Church of the Order of Saint Paul, host graves of the Polish kings and great Poles.

[45] Kazimierz Shopping Mall was constructed on the site of the former slaughter-house in the early 21st century; it is located next to the new Jewish cemetery.

[46] The passage is a quotation from Stanisław Wyspiański's *Akropolis*, cf. Stanisław Wyspiański, *Akropolis: dramat w czterech aktach*, Warszawa 1957.

[47] Cf. Wojciech Szymański, "Ta świnia, Okoński", in: *Obieg*, http://www.obieg.pl/felieton/19195 (accessed 1 April 2014).

[48] Vladimir Jankélévitch, "Dans l'honneur et la dignité", in: Jankélévitch, *L'imprescriptible: Pardonner? Dans l'honneur et la dignité*, Paris 1986, 102.

[49] Ankersmit, "Remembering the Holocaust", 185.

memory. It belongs to those who, rather than embracing the innocent status of the witness of the Shoah, are willing to confront the actual role played by Poles in the events that led to the demise of the Jewish population. This role was described in Jan Tomasz Gross' *Neighbours. The Destruction of the Jewish Community in Jedwabne, Poland* (2001). The discussion around *Neighbours* took hold of the Polish media when the present thirty-somethings were teenagers. This moment of recognition had two important consequences: the monument made of chairs, offering us the role of witnesses, lost its relevance, and, more importantly, the monument as such, construed as a representation of collective memory, has become, in this new epistemological situation that emerged at the turn of the centuries, nothing short of smugness.

[43] This brief outline of contemporary strategies of commemoration employed by monuments in Podgórze makes no claims to comprehensiveness. As a conclusion, I would like to share several reflections which, I believe, can prove useful for further detailed research conducted within the fields of both visual culture and memory studies.

[44] Firstly – I allow myself to speak here as an art critic, rather than as a historian – it seems that the ubiquitous remarks on the poor quality of Polish public space, allegedly characterised by very few interesting and valuable contemporary sculptural works, are hardly substantiated. The monuments discussed and analysed in the present article testify to something very different. Although they are dissimilar, the discussed works share high artistic quality. Secondly, Podgórze, whose history I described as the break of history, seems, in fact, to be a very particular traumatic place of memory, with an unprecedented number of monuments that represent various trends in the postwar monumental sculpture. The exceptionality of this district rests also in the fact that since the 1960s it has been a place where one can observe the continuity of various forms of commemoration. On the one hand, it means that the district's approach to the past has not yet been fully formulated and ordered, on the other, it suggests constant need of working through the memory of the district. In this sense, Podgórze can be seen as a model example of the work of memory of at least several generations of its inhabitants. Thirdly, I have categorised the monuments I have discussed here as representing certain trends within monumental sculpture of the second half of the 20th and the early 21st century. This suggested order, from metaphorical monumentalism, through metonymic counter-monumentalism, to neurotic – perhaps nihilistic – strategy that negates preceding modes of commemoration, has, of course, an open structure and does not claim any rights to completeness. Yet, it allows one to trace the development of the rapidly and dynamically changing historical awareness and of the condition of Polish memory of one of the darkest events of the 20th century.

[45] Transformations of this memory can be effectively observed and discussed on the basis of monuments whose full meaning is revealed only in an intertextual and inter-visual game

– that is to say, in the relations that are formed between them. Perhaps it is in this very game and in the relational space between individual works – for not in the works themselves, as I have been trying to show – where one can find this exceptional place where Assmann's imperative: "Remember!" is being fulfilled.

*Translated by Karolina Kolenda*