

Malopolski Instytut Kultury

Nowa_Huta.rtf. Heritage. Memory.
Local Community

http://www.mik.krakow.pl/nowa_huta.html

Objectives of the project

The development of the title comes from an abbreviation of "doc.rtf" (rich text format). It reveals the main and most important factors for us that we deal with in the project: relations (in the Polish language it is a game with words, since relation – pol. relacja – means both a story or report and a relation between people or people and objects as well), texts (records of memories and stories, stories and objects as texts of culture), form (artistic shape, medium the relations and texts should take).

We appointed the four most important objectives:

- to create new visit cards for Nowa Huta, with real and visible participation of inhabitants;
- to strengthen the relationship between the local community and the inhabited place, with the support of art, anthropology and sociology;
- to find unconventional forms of representing stories of the Nowa Huta builders, which should be an insightful resource for the present day generation;
- to find the best medium for the voices of the Nowa Huta inhabitants, to make these voices audible, and the visual form recognizable in the public space for people not only from Nowa Huta.

Project description

The project "Heritage. Memory. Local Community" is being implemented within the framework of the Programme, Culture 2000; it lasts 2 years from October 2004 to October 2006. Our local variant – nowa_huta.rtf consists of 3 modules: "Subject on Willowe Square" ("Temat na Willowym"), "Nowa Huta Icons" ("Ikony Nowej Huty"), "The Found Luggage" ("Bagaz odnaleziony"):

1. "Subject on Willowe Square" = it is an attempt to create space for the discussion on the ways in which the first market-square of Nowa Huta should develop. With this end in view we arranged an outdoor café on Wilowe Square on every Sunday in May and June 2005 and we invited the neighbouring inhabitants to join us. Every meeting was devoted to a different subject (e.g. Colours of facades of buildings in NH, Plants in NH, Children and their spaces, Art on Willowe Square, Senior citizens, etc.). A week-

ly "Temat na Willowym" – occasional newspaper, accompanying every meeting – introduced every subject. The results of this forum – recorded utterances and opinions of the inhabitants – were a part of the report addressed to local authorities. "Nowa Huta Icons" = a proposal of creating contemporary visit cards of Nowa Huta, representative ones for the inhabitants of Nowa Huta and recognisable for the newcomers to the district. It is an attempt of revealing, with the help of different media, the personal stories and voices of NH inhabitants, related to the place they live in.

2. There are 3 things co-created by them in Icons:

- Book of Liberated Texts is a record of the effects of meetings of different generations of NH and the collection of subjective documents connected with the district. It consists of 15 interviews run by the team of documentary reporters – the Researchers of Nowa Huta Truths – and their field research diary – the testimony of their entering into intensive contact with the district. We can find among the respondents: a professor of chemistry, who came to NH from Lviv; a postman, remembering NH from before its industrialization; a defender from the local football team; a Rom musician; a Greek – worker of the Center of Social Aid. The Book includes 5 thematic fields: "me and space", "matter of NH", "time – colour – sound", "the face, I remember", "work".
- Poster for Nowa Huta – 5 posters created by the group of artists inspired by The Book, including their own observations of the district. Corridors of Space – in preparation, planned for year 2006 – the evolution of initially planned RPG (Role Playing Game). With the aid of artistic installation NH inhabitants will be able to reveal in a new, unconventional way the essential virtue of the district – its space. Some inhabitants will be invited to assist artists in pointing out their favourite walking paths. The three-dimensional compositions will be placed there. The installations will stimulate the perception of flâneurs on the new paths to rediscover the uniqueness of NH space.
- Found Luggage = it is an attempt to create an exhibition, which would display the experience of emigration: the loss of one homeland in favour of gaining a brand new one. The majority of the first inhabitants and the pioneers of NH came to this place leaving life in small villages and provincial communities behind themselves. Leaving home, those then young people took pieces of their old homeland as their luggage. These things have survived in the form of an object – souvenir. What did those people lose and what did they gain while abandoning one homeland for another one? To what extent will losses and gains be repeated in the generation of their grandchildren? The experiences of NH pioneers will be set together with the voice of the young generation of NH. The exhibition will include space for commentary of NH high school students on their visions of abandoning home and going abroad. The essence of the exhibition is not reduced to showing an important historical moment in the history of NH. More important is a question of universal human experience and multigenerational discussion. The preparatory process for the exhibition was anticipated by the series of workshops on the anthropology of memory for seniors who declared their participation in the proj-

ect. The objects brought by the seniors will be the "heroes" of the exhibition. What kind of memory do they generate?

Social context

Nowa Huta was rising from its grass roots in the 50s, after the war, in the explosion of the enthusiasm of pioneers – people who came here from different territories of Poland with a hope for social promotion. This unique social energy helped to create an unusual architectural complex – "city" designed according to one comprehensive plan and built by one generation of builders. The architectural phenomenon of NH remains the pride and the testimony of the pioneers' life. The character of the place was defined by situating it in the neighbourhood of traditional and conservative Krakow.

Furthermore, apart from its unique architecture, industrialisation and Steelworks were the main definitions of the district.

After 1989, in those areas, where industry used to flourish, the period of social and economical transformation strongly left its mark. As the result, NH was made to search for its new destination.

Project *nowa_huta.rtf* (relacje, teksty, forma) intended to create a forum of artistic utterances and research for those who built NH, those who grew up together with the city, and finally for those who inherited it. Those three generations need to find a new definition of their relation with the architectural and social space they are the part of.

Methodologies

The Searching and Strengthening the Truths of Nowa Huta took place during the process, which began at the moment of engaging the local community into participation, and the points of approach – the circulation of artistic effect.

- The recruitment of the searchers of NH Truths – the announcement about the challenge. Announcement in newspaper, internet, leaflets interview into the environment;
- The process of searching adequate form for rediscovered Truths – the stage of co-creation of The Book, Posters, Exhibition.

THE BOOK OF LIBERATED TEXTS – the group was supported in the process of creating by an art historian, sociologist, anthropologist, expert on literature (subjects of the workshops included: contemporary mind-map of NH, intertextual way of building The Book, how to talk to people without taking the voice away from them).

POSTER FOR NOWA HUTA – during the work on social poster, using the matter of memories and personal stories stemmed from The Book, the artists were supported by a graphic designer and art historian.

FOUND LUGGAGE – seniors, when creating narrations about their own lives, which will become a part of the exhibition, were trained by an expert on Tadeusz Kantor. Clichés of memory by Kantor were the main inspirations.

- The circulation of the art effect – first meeting of inhabitants with The Book, Posters, –

Found Luggage. The exhibitions of Icons, Posters in the public space of NH -posting the district, Found Luggage" exhibition, Spots in the Local Chronicle.

Critical points and applied solutions

The majority of the project's pivotal points were related to the negotiations over the choice of the medium. This provoked two questions: how the collected opinions, voices, Truths should be presented, and what medium should be employed in the process of strengthening the rediscovering of these Truths.

The first such decision was made up at the beginning of the project. The series of visual visit cards of Nowa Huta – 5 posters for Nowa Huta – were to be made on the basis of material collected by the documentary reporters. At the stage of further creative sessions it turned out that this collection could be very rich and refreshing and it should not be wasted. It was necessary to find a separate art form for it. We thought about a spacious liberat book and about an installation. After making inquiries among some circles of NH we decided to create a traditional publication with an unconventional content and layout.

As far artistic form is concerned, the second pivotal point was the decision about the change of creation RPG (role playing game) of Nowa Huta, the game of imagination set in Nowa Huta. The idea of RPG was transformed into the concept of "Corridors of Space", in other words the paths, appointed by the inhabitants of Nowa Huta (in co-operation with artists) with the installations stimulating the perception of flaneurs.

Interaction with partners (communities, public or private institutions, others) and Financing - fundraising strategies

In the process of strengthening the new shape of relations between local community and its place and the working out of contemporary visit cards of the district, we are supported by some local institutions. First of all, Museum of Nowa Huta, popular among inhabitants, a perfectly equipped institution, makes its exhibition space available for nowa_huta.rtf: workshops, exhibitions, and meetings with people. It is the same with Galeria Al. Róz. Centre of Culture C. K. Norwid is our partner in propagating the method of social debate worked out during "Subject On Willowe Square " and the effects of this debate. The members of the local Seniors'Club participate in the creating the exhibition "Found Luggage".

In a European perspective, 8 partners take part in the project Heritage. Memory. Local Community, with its leader – ACCR (see further on the web page).

There was a rule accepted, which guaranties the exchange of experience, in which every partner would go for a research trip to two other partners, and those two others would be hosted by him. The trip teams will consist of direct participants of the project.

The whole budget of the two-year project, financed in the frame of Culture 2000, amounted 389.110 euros. The input of EU is 229.110 euro. The budget of Malopolskie Instytut Kultury is 38.000 euro (the input of EU 18.000).

Moreover EU finances the internet database called "Proxima" accessible for every

partner after the finishing of the project. (<http://proxima.accr>)

Our situation was not obvious financially from the beginning. We were accepted to the consortium without our certainty and guarantee about bringing our own input. Only after the admission, convincing the authorities of Malopolska province about the idea of the project were, we admitted, *va banque*, we managed to get the missing part.

Evaluation of the project - conclusions

All these activities were a great experiment for us. We did not know if documentary reporters would appear, and the pre-conditions we defined were not easy: an application, the intensive rhythm of requiring workshops, tough interviews with the inhabitants. The potential respondents had a lot of doubts and often asked us the question: "What can I tell you?" Of course these attitudes were changed during the situation of meetings with documentary reporters. We did not have the certainty of how many people would be interested in an invitation to the cafe on Willowe Square and who from pioneers of Nowa Huta would like to share his/hers experience of their change of homeland in "Found Luggage".

The effect of this risk was astonishing: the work of documentary group (sometime 40h of the interviews), material, which was used for creation of posters – very vividly discussed Icons. The utterances of inhabitants of Willowe Square, which give the grain for the report, confirm a bigger engagement of people in the place.

The best conclusion on summarising the first year of acting *nowa_huta.rtf?*, let it be this anecdote. In spring, during the first presentation of the posters, one of the artist suggested visions of the Nowa Huta landscape at dusk. One day later, the article reporting the session had the title: "The district of rising sun".

And this is only the half-way point...