

Corporality is the basis for the creation of thought

The first edition of RETRO/PER/SPEKTYWY festival: Theatre Festival Chorea 2010 was officially opened by the art director Tomasz Rodowicz, as well as his friends and coworkers; the effects of their work can be judged during next week. On the first day the spectators could see a spatial exhibition, a theatrical play and audiovisual concert. The artistic expressions aimed to show corporality as an essential part of the human identity.

Just after the official opening the spectators were invited to see Paweł Korbus' exhibition. "The training ground for the body and circumstances" – that's how the exhibition is called – is a set of spatial constructions aimed to provoke reflections not only on the creation of identities of particular individuals but, above all, on the store of culture and tradition. Part by part, we decode another fragments which build a puzzle of the Polish identity. In the nicely arranged space not only compositions concerning national symbols can be found, but also elements regarding the entire cultural context; on white sheets over our heads there are fragments of psalms and expressions concerning events in the Polish history. The influence of Christianity on the Polish mentality is indisputable, but when we juxtapose the biblical fragments with our national emblem, the eagle, put in one of the windows, an interesting combination is created. Contradictory information has been put into our heads since childhood and Paweł Korbus' exhibition shows the brain of a Pole, filled with information. On the floor we can see a space prepared to play hopscotch – an area marked with chalk; several constructions are suspended in space, one looks like a flying machine (a symbol of humane, Renaissance bases of contemporary, rationalized culture), another – like an anthropoid giant (a symbol of corporality and an opposition to the previous construction). The room is also filled with screens; some projections are shown on the floor, others on TVs or a rectangular silver basin. After having watched the exposition a question arises: where is the place for corporality in a culture based on military and patriotic symbols and Christian ideology founded on shame and the lack of awareness of one's own body?

It is the body, its abilities and limitations which act out the essential role in Tomasz Rodowicz's play "Grotowski – the attempt to retreat". This retreat is an attempt to depart from academized profile of one of the greatest Polish theatre directors and innovators. Rodowicz abandons the theory, prefers to ask questions and check how important Grotowski's methods are for young people today, how much can these texts tell about the present day. Apart from mime and movement choreography demanding well preparation, the play is filled with reflection on human beings, on to what extent memories influence our future life, to what extent a human can free himself from the past, but also remain a prisoner of his own body which doesn't forget or forgive, since corporality is a basis for the creation of thought. In an empty, post-factory space there is a show in a form of workshops during which Grotowski is only a pretext for starting the quest. The play begins with a story told by Tomasz Rodowicz who recalls his meetings with Jerzy Grotowski. The director reappears on the stage during the play and tells other stories from the past, sits on the right side and watches, like Tadeusz Kantor, the course of events. On the beginning of the play Rodowicz tells the spectators that on the one hand, he feels the need to express his opinion on what Grotowski said and did; he feels that he owns Grotowski something. But on the other hand, Rodowicz doesn't want Grotowski to become just a topic of over-intellectualized discussions, that's why the director took up cooperation with people who didn't know anything about this great author, didn't read his theoretical works or plays. As a consequence, young people try to deal with the impossible in this play, bearing in mind that "the impossible broken into dozens of smaller pieces becomes possible". They also look for the answer for the question: what can a man do with his own loneliness? With his corporality? With himself? They pass on doubts, the conclusion of which takes place in everyone of us, but in a different way.

The event crowning the evening was an audiovisual concert with a revealing title "32 minutes". A

show prepared by Maria Porzyc and Sebastian Klima was based on two elements – rapidly changing images were displayed on a big screen and accompanied by music which set the pace. We could see stairs, mysterious spaces, geometric figures and objects, like an usual clock. An alfresco audiovisual concert was a great occasion for reflections and relax after intellectual challenges given by the creators of the play and exhibition.

The first day of the Festival was definitely successful. Apart from the diversity of presented forms and good organization, great atmosphere is an essential part of meetings with the theatre and other visual arts. We hope that another editions of Łódź theatre festival will be famous for it.

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