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# THE MUSEUM SHOP IN POLAND. UNUSED SPACE OF INTERACTION AND A CHALLENGE FOR INSTITUTION MANAGERS

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National Museum in Szczecin

**Abstract:** The article is a fragment of the author's study: *Sklep muzealny. Rola i znaczenie we współczesnym muzeum*, written while attending Postgraduate Museum Studies at the University of Warsaw. Based on interviews as well as questionnaires and visual surveys it describes problems pertaining to the location of museum shops within museum premises, correlation between the shop's assortment on offer and the museum program, as well as the awareness of museum managers regarding the versatility of such a shop. In many cases museum shops are neglected, a state of things reflected in underinvestment, negligence, unattractive merchandise, and unfriendly spatial arrangement. Such an approach is incomprehensible considering that in the majority of cases a shop is the final accent of touring a museum. The author underlined the significance of projects intending to modernise the

spatial arrangement of museum shops and envisaging their transformation into spaces for pleasantly spending time and relaxing so as to ease museum fatigue, as well as an opportunity to examine and purchase publications offering deeper insight into expositions. The conclusion of the article stresses the abundance of interdisciplinary research, which may, and should encompass the museum shop. Attention is drawn to issues associated with, i.a. the selection and competence of shop personnel, place within an organisational structure, co-operation with leasees, stock replenishment, and budgeting. Further research included the adaptation of both historic and modern interiors for museum shop purposes, outfitting (interior design, furniture, lighting), the presence of exclusive and collector's items, marketing, promotion, and the use of new media in building the image of the shop.

**Keywords:** museum shop, new museology, architectural design of museum buildings, recipient of museum contents, museum programme.

The protagonist of this text – the museum shop – is an unimposing subject of contemporary museum studies. By limiting ourselves to the range of Polish literature on the subject we can formulate even further going statements. In domestic research on museums the shop remains clearly an ignored element or, at the very least, seems to be unnoticed. Its “transparency” could be the consequence of a conviction about its inferior function, serving the exposition programme of the museum, and prosaic role. This is the sort of opinion I

encountered within the milieu of Polish museum curators – a view that could be even treated as stereotypical. Just like every stereotype this one too is based, on the one hand, on recurring experience, and, on the other hand, on unjust and destructive generalisation. Conventionalised convictions restricted to a cliché isolate us from dynamic changes in the contemporary world, including those transpiring within the sphere of culture.

Obviously, the appearance of the shop, its ambiance, and the merchandise on offer are derivatives of the character of

the museum in which it had been situated. This subjugation, however, is not tantamount to saying that the museum shop cannot perform an essential part in the realisation of the statutory goals of the institution, in particular in the light of newest tendencies in museology. The deprecating mental attitude of the museum management towards the space of the shop converts into its material negligence, which, in turn, results in not exploiting its potential and could affect the overall image of the museum institution.

In view of the contemporary complexity and multi-functionality of museums each element is significant. If modern museums are to respond to the challenges of contemporaneity and the future then all their components must be subjected to modernisation so as not to stand out from a museum's level and ambitions. This holds true also for modern, multi-dimensional museum shops. By making it possible to purchase popular or professional publications or souvenirs they support the emotional, educational, and image impact of the institution and, on the other hand, can influence the turnover, trade practice, and character of the offer made on the market of goods, whose task consists of the creation of our surrounding. In other words, museum shops, reinforced by the authority of the institution within which they function, mould universal tastes. The role played by shops will grow, a process that also demands reaction on the part of people dealing with museums and museology. In many cases, the shop assistant is the only person who enjoys an opportunity – or is obligated – to establish a more profound relation with the visitor. Social opinion about the institution depends to a large degree on the standard of his workplace and status, and the more it is built upon the basis of direct relations the better it becomes. A neglected and badly supplied shop and an incompetent and impolite salesperson might render all efforts made by curators and promotion departments totally ineffective.

My examinations of the state of museum shops were provoked by questions asking whether the managers of Polish museums are aware of the significance and multi-functionality of shops located within museum space, and whether my conviction about ignoring extra-exhibition space in Polish museological literature is correct.<sup>1</sup> The purpose of the conducted studies involved both a diagnosis and a presentation – illustrated by concrete data – of good and bad practices as well as solutions. The latter could support museum managers and serve as a model for creating and developing museum shops.

## Object of research

The sphere of my research included intramural museum shops. Reflection on the definition of a shop indicates three aspects of the perception of its location in museum space:

- topographic – between (sacralised) exposition space and inferior administrative and communication spaces as well as those leading outside the institution,
- functional within the structure of the institution – between factual departments (exposition organisation, promotion, publication, education) and administration and service departments,
- structural on a "macro" scale – between belonging to the public structure of the cultural institution, whose value and effectiveness are measured by the significance of

the collections, the cumulation of knowledge, the social impact of the program, and participation in the market according to principles identical as those in the case of other commercial subjects.

Moreover, the museum shop may exist in two "realities": materially – in the institution building, and virtually – as an Internet shop. Embarking upon research on the museum shop I was aware of the multi-aspect nature of its object. Hence the need to define the topic of my study. I conceive the intramural museum shop as a space:

- existing in the museum building and visibly distinguished (intramural),
- intended for the presentation and sale of books and periodicals, works of art and their reproductions, objects serving entertainment purposes, gadgets, daily use items and other objects intended for trade turnover (shop),
- whose trade offer remains connected with the character and purposes of the institution in whose space it finds itself (museum).

## Location of the shop and its character in a contemporary museum

The majority of museum buildings designed at present acknowledge the presence of a shop. The latter's function and significance are subjected to constant changes, which should be followed by conceptions launched by interior designers as well as architects and their projects of new museum seats. This process is impacted by social habits generated by consumer culture, which take on the form of an expectation of similar standards in all areas of social activity.

Architects designing large shopping centres and malls make sure to create for the customers of numerous shops – often scattered on many storeys – conditions for rest, entertainment, or even satiating hunger. Such centres include a distinct division into a part connected with the prime object of activity (trade) and remaining space (recreation). While taking a closer look at the latter we should avoid ignoring its significance. Often its arrangement tempts and attracts by means of vast passages – strolling along them is supposed to ensure regeneration. Demonstrations of assorted activity span from a presentation of the most recent models of cars and beauty treatments to cooking shows. If someone becomes really hungry, he can stop at a fast food restaurant. The paradigm of experiences becomes limitless. Each person decides about the sources of his satisfaction. Everything is to assure regeneration and entertainment between successive points along the trail.<sup>2</sup>

Solutions applied in large shopping centres should also affect managers of cultural institutions confronted with finding a suitable way of opening museums to the trends and needs of contemporary consumers. Naturally, this is not a case of a simple transference or emulation of solutions.

The challenge facing managers of contemporary museums should assume the form of the space of the building in which shops, cafés, or information-ticket offices are traditionally located. Touring the showrooms demands just as much physical effort as traversing shopping centres and certainly engages the intellect – for which recreation is a natural and necessary condition for functioning – to a much larger degree.

Organising relaxation-oriented and friendly space will become a necessary norm for museums. After an intellectually and physically exhausting tour the visitor requires indispensable space for spiritual and physical revival. Its character is justified also by the etymology of the word – the French: *récréation* or the Latin: *recreatio*, from: *recreo* – *I recreate, create anew, restore the original form, etc.*; hence *recreation* denotes: *rest, relaxation or even entertainment*.<sup>3</sup>

Such space should provide the visitor with the possibility of making a choice. By the very nature of things recreation is a voluntary activity. Each person – owing either to his interests or assorted sources of satisfaction – individually seeks his form of recreation. Some find rest, leisure, and entertainment in a good book, others – in successful shopping, and still others – in meetings in a café. Upon other occasions merely spending time in a comfortable and aesthetically designed space suffices. The role, which recreation is starting to play in the contemporary world becomes important in connection with the necessity of avoiding stressful situations, the possession of a greater amount of free time, and raising the standard of living.<sup>4</sup>

Numerous museums have already long ago separated a café, a souvenir shop or a bookstore, which increasing frequently function in the same space and within a single activity. Today, however, this approach too appears to be insufficient. A growing number of public utility buildings entered from the outside are being granted the features of a large lobby or lounge room. Unfortunately, the practice of Polish museums is distant from ensuring visitors a place for rest and recreation. This is why such an optimistic effect is produced by plans pursued by museum directors and encompassing the modernisation of already existing shops or the expansion of functions fulfilled by newly opened venues. The latter option pertains to the Museum of Modern Art in Warsaw. The character of the extra-exposition space in the future seat of this institution is presented by Marcel Andino Velez, deputy director of the Museum: *Naturally, the bookshop in the new museum building in Defilady Square will be situated on the ground floor in such a way so that its sphere will permeate other, adjoining ones. We shall find ourselves in it by entering through the museum lobby on our way to the café. The bookshop will be also accessible from other sides of the building. None of those spaces will be separated. Here, it will be possible to rest, read or enjoy a cup of coffee – to do all those things simultaneously or simply to take a break by doing absolutely nothing*.<sup>5</sup>

A successive statement made by M. A. Velez confirms the purposefulness of comparing the extra-exhibition space of a museum with shopping centre passages: *We would like the arranged space with the infiltrating functions of a bookshop, a café, and a lobby to become an alternative for spending leisure time in shopping centres. In our case – with an additional view of the town, a street or a park. Despite the fact that the function fulfilled by a bookshop includes commercial activity, in a museum this will not be a place where one comes only to purchase a book, but space arranged for recreation, meetings, and leisure*.<sup>6</sup>

Dr hab. Piotr Oszczanowski, director of the National Museum in Wrocław, is also planning to introduce changes that in 2018 will render the space of the museum shop friendlier and make relaxation and spending free time

possible. In doing so he justifies his plans by the increasingly frequent perception of museums as places for recreation and leisure (alongside learning and personal development). Today, the Wrocław Museum bookshop is separated from the large and well-lit hall by a wooden wall, and its outfitting is composed, apart from bookshelves and showcases, of two rather uninviting and uncomfortable chairs and a table. According to Director Oszczanowski modernisation will signify changing the function of the existing shop: *Plans involve the elimination of panes of glass separating the shop from the spacious hall; consequently, the merchandise on offer in the existing bookshop will be available in the hall, where visitors will be able to sit on comfortable seats or pouffes to read or relax. Café and bookshop spaces will be linked. Expanding the area of the bookshop by connecting it with the hall will make it feasible to become acquainted with its offer in much more comfortable conditions – drinking tea or coffee and, up to a certain time of the day, enjoying natural light*.<sup>7</sup> The justification offered by the director of the National Museum in Wrocław<sup>8</sup> is sufficiently universal to inspire modernisation plans for many other museums. It also constitutes an excellent conclusion for reflections about the functions of the museum shop other than those focused solely on commerce and information: *Today we must accommodate the specific expectations of our recipients. By presenting this beautiful space to visitors we want to make a promise, which shall convince our guest that beyond the entrance hall threshold he will find something that will render our institution exceptional; this happens always when we leave the outdoors to enter the sphere of the sacrum. In order for this to succeed, however, there must exist the widest possible aura of comfort and relaxation. The offered gastronomic experiences should not be distant from their aesthetic or intellectual counterparts*.<sup>9</sup>

### Location of the shop in the museum building

The location of shops in museum buildings is extremely diversified and, as a rule, enforced by the individual construction of the building. Undoubtedly, the most fortunate solution is the one engaging the visitor in the space of the shop and the area of its impact.

Owing to the previously evoked role played by leisure, which the visitor requires after having toured the exposition, my presentation of the location of shops shall not accentuate remarks about ignoring this particular aspect of the functioning of the museum. I assume that in the cases discussed below, in which thought had not been given to space for relaxation or the later was reduced to an arrangement aid, this absence is temporary or else the organisation of such space was objectively impossible.

The solution applied at the Museum of King Jan III's Palace at Wilanów, where the visitor may exit from the permanent exhibition only by passing through a successive interior, i.e. the shop, remains distinct against the backdrop of all the examined shops. The oppressive character of this situation is illusory because the historical furniture used in the shop interior produces an impression of uniformity with the Palace exposition. After a while the interior proves to be a shop. Its offer, closely connected with the exposition and



1. The present shop arrangement of the National Museum in Wrocław will soon be replaced with a more spacious and comfortable one



2. The shop in the Museum of King Jan III's Palace at Wilanów with its stylised interior, which has to be walked through while leaving the exposition; broad benches allow to have a rest, to get deeper into the contents of offered publications, or to organise meetings, workshops etc.

the outfitting, is significant for the reception of the whole effect. Only in this museum did I come across such an original and unique approach.

Favourable location always situates the shop right next to the entrance/exit of the given museum institution. As a rule, however, the same door acts as an entrance and an exit, as in the case of the National Museum in Szczecin – the Museum of Regional Traditions. Here, the museum shop is situated in an open space in which the visitor finds himself immediately after opening the door. Thanks to such an arrangement the Museum is also toured by persons who return for the constantly up-dated shop offer.

The majority of museum shops are, as a rule, closed interiors, which can be entered (or not) while touring the exhibitions. This is the solution mentioned by nine shops included in the survey.<sup>10</sup> The situation is improved by glassed-in walls, making it possible to see both the space and the offer. A conception of this kind was applied at the POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews and the Warsaw Uprising Museum. In the light of current modernisation, the shop at the National Museum in Poznań, placed in an unattractive and unfunctional cubicle, appears to be outdated. This is a construction straight out of the 1990s – inserted into a large hall it is not opened to the visitor nor does it welcome him.

It is also difficult to identify the intentions, which in the otherwise brilliant building of the National Museum in Wrocław – the Four Domes Pavilion – force the visitor on his way to the exhibition to first pass through the shop. This necessity of crossing the stretch between the ticket office and the exposition is not quite clear. After all, the need to make purchases usually appears after the tour<sup>11</sup>. This is why if the exhibition is entered by using a single entrance and left through the exit it is best to situate the shop next to the latter. The same holds true for the wish to rest after seeing the exposition. The shop in the Four Dome Pavilions has been outfitted with one of the most attractive relaxation zones.

Would it not have been more purposeful to enter it after having traversed long passages and showrooms?

In the case of the museum shop the possession of a separate entrance with a shop window seen from the street is particularly attractive. This is how we enter the shop at the Krzysztofory Palace – the Historical Museum of the City of Kraków; I encountered the same scheme in Germany (Schlesisches Museum zu Görlitz).

The most frequently applied solution is a shop visible after entering the museum building – this is the way it is situated in the majority of museums responding to surveys.<sup>12</sup> The situation of the shop may be adversely affected by its location in a building in which the visitor finds it by accident or is outright unable to do so, as during my first visit at POLIN. I was not alone since another person filling the questionnaire wrote: *It is difficult to find the shop even while remaining in the building*. The existence of a similar problem was indicated by the shop at the Silesian Museum in Katowice. Another unfortunate arrangement and location of a bookshop occurs in the National Museum in Szczecin – Dialogue Centre “Przełomy”, which was compelled to pay the price for the fact that the designers granted priority to the aesthetic conception instead of functionality. It is worth stressing that the last three shops were opened in buildings designed currently, i.e. at a time when awareness of the impact exerted by spatial solutions upon the realisation of trade functions is universal.

Nearing the end of this chapter I am inclined to propose the thesis that, paradoxically, a greater likelihood of choosing favourable locations takes place when we adapt part of an existing building for a shop being aware of the already familiar space and the communication predilections of the visitors, than when while designing the building we entrust the location of the shop to the architect. Quite possibly, the reason lies in the fact that the connection between the architect and the shop ends after the completion of the project, and that the stage of designing the building lacks





3. The shop of the National Museum in Szczecin – the Museum of Regional Traditions is located in an open space, just behind the institution's main door



4. The shop of POLIN – Museum of the History of Polish Jews in Warsaw has been located in the closed space, along a dark corridor; a glass wall of the shop gives it more chance for being noticed, which is not easy from the inside of the museum



5. The shop of the National Museum in Poznań operates in a cubicle fitted into the space of a large hall (the furthest one in a row on the left side), similarly as a cubicle for security staff (in the foreground)



6. The entrance to the cubicle confining the space of a shop in the National Museum in Poznań resembles the type of entrance used rather in banks or offices

professional consultation with the interests of the shop in mind. Regardless whether a museum foresees handing over the shop to a leasee or running it independently the selection of a site for organising a shop should be preceded by a branch consultation, which would make it possible to assess the convenience of the location, space organisation, merchandise security, or the possibility of introducing additional functions. Erroneous location will cause the shop's dysfunctionality within its economic, promotion, and programme dimensions.

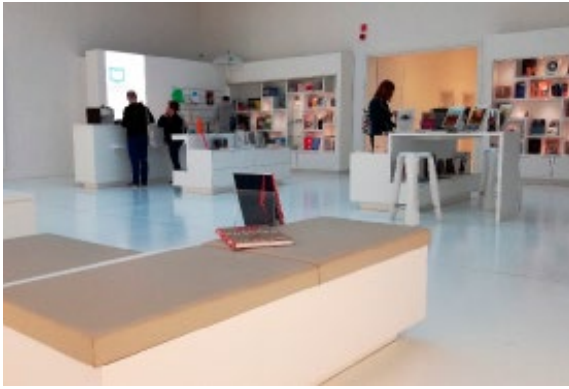
### Selection of the offer and staff

Inasmuch as general supervision over a museum shop involves, as a rule, several persons – from the museum

director and chief accountant to the public orders and legal departments – the question of planning merchandise on a daily basis, i.e. negotiating the conditions of contracts, determining regular prices, defining the conditions of promotions and sales, and constructing the shop's image should be ascribed to the shop management and its team.

Obviously, the supreme criterion for selecting stock should be established within a group of persons responsible for the museum's programme and approved by the museum director.

The process of determining what we wish to have on the shop shelves and, even more so, what we do not want to sell is fundamental. A direct relation should take place between the exhibition, the education programme, and the offer of commodities for sale. The establishment of merchandise



7. The shop of the National Museum in Wrocław – the Four Domes Pavilion would be perfect for a rest among books, after seeing the exhibition; unfortunately, the visitor passes through it before entering the exhibition



8. An additional entrance to the shop „from the street” is located next door to the Schlesisches Museum zu Görlitz; it increases the potential interest both in the shop and in the museum

determinants should engage the largest possible group of people involved in the realisation of the programme targets of a given museum.

Persons whose opinions should be taken into consideration while shaping the shop offer should certainly include curators of permanent and temporary exhibitions since shop shelves must display publications and objects whose connection with exhibitions is clear-cut. Books thus should be derivatives of exhibitions (albums, catalogues). It is just as important for the museum visitor to be able to find in the shop articles that inspired the exhibition curator, or which constitute an interesting context of the display. Only six among 15 surveyed shops indicated co-operation with a curator (Historical Museum of the City of Kraków, POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews, Gdynia City Museum, Museum of King Jan III's Palace at Wilanów, MOCAK Museum of Contemporary Art in Kraków, Wrocław Contemporary Museum). The widest range of co-operation was presented by POLIN – here, the collections department, the curators of temporary exhibitions, and the chief curator of the permanent exhibition choose works whose images will be then transferred to commodities. The project of those objects and thus their ultimate shape are also subjected to further approval. Moreover, the assortment of books becomes the topic of binding consultations conducted by a specialist dealing with the Museum publications, the chief expert on Jewish studies and methodology, and other members of the staff, e.g. experts on Hebrew and Yiddish texts. Visual surveys confirmed that the praxis applied at POLIN guarantees cohesive and valuable effects.

In turn, offers available at the shop in the Museum of King Jan III's Palace at Wilanów were to a great degree affected by the shop's inclusion into the structure of Museum contents. Due to the fact that the activity of the shop is the domain of the vice-director of the historical reconstruction and sale department, the shop is treated as an essential subject of the contentual structure of the Museum and its offer is the outcome of conscious co-operation involving employees of this institution. None of the objects on sale originated outside the Museum. The shop attempts to reach the client by offering not merchandise but experiences and values held dear by the Museum; it is also concerned with the client

becoming capable of identifying himself with the Museum and establishing an emotional tie. For all practical purposes, everything is subjected to creating an individual relation with the visitor. The manner in which this task is accomplished is explained by Director Paweł Jaskanis: *We are inclined more towards selling souvenirs made right in front of the visitor and often with his participation. Every day our calligrapher, present in the shop, creates something by using a block printing press. We consider the participation of the spectator in all these undertakings to be the leading sales criterion. Copper bullets made by our historical reconstructors and coins minted on the spot – all involve participation of members of the public. Perhaps this is not the most essential fact at the moment, but such artefacts sell well and bring the Museum considerable profit in relation to the input.*<sup>13</sup>

The optimal offer at each museum shop is not only the outcome of a compromise between individual proposals made by the employees of a given institution but also the effect of taking into consideration the expectations, needs, and purchasing potential of the clients. That, which is displayed on the shop shelves cannot reflect individual tastes.<sup>14</sup> Such a radically individual approach to shaping the offer is rare in commercial activity, and if it does occur then it pertains to subjects who by definition treat an auteur selection as their determinant. The offer cannot be left to individual decisions even more so if we take into account the sui generis mission performed by museum shops and the fact that they are subsidised by public means.

What should the museum shop offer visitors? Apart from obvious museum and museum-oriented publications it should propose items concurrent with the exceptional and unique nature of objects displayed in the showrooms. At the same time, the preservation of their egalitarian character, corresponding to the postulate of “new museology”, should be the object of concern. A museum shop is a “golden mean” site – its merchandise cannot be identical with that of bookshop retail chains or shops selling tourist souvenirs, just as the shop cannot offer solely products costing the same as in luxury boutiques. Importantly, regardless of the type and price of the products their quality must remain unquestioned.

Clients should be guaranteed, as far as possible, access to superior theoretical and historical publications on the

humanities, of fundamental significance for the domains with which the museum programme is linked. Generally speaking, the museum shop should maintain a high intellectual level. This does not signify resigning from professional popular literature, whose reception is easier, but the avoidance of commercial “mass scale” products.

In the case of souvenirs and gadgets attention should be paid to their quality and – as long as the financial potential of the museum allows – institutional “personalisation” should be guaranteed. It would be best if such products were to feature the museum logo and/or use reproductions of artworks or exhibits from its collections, making it possible to “bring” the museum mark outside the museum walls, popularise the institution, and exert a wider impact on social consciousness. Upon this occasion it is worth mentioning a rather delicate issue, particularly conspicuous at the moment and connected with the universal use of national symbols: the colours, flags, and emblems of the Republic of Poland, for commercial purposes. Upon frequent occasions such merchandise is merged with distinctly defined confrontation-oriented politics of memory. Reaching for objects brimming with national symbols is connected more with a demonstration of identity than with, e.g. a willingness to memorialise a visit at a museum or participation in an event organised by the latter.

In their pursuit of profit producers of “national souvenirs” compete in creating kitsch. Goods of this sort are featured on the shelves of certain museum shops in Poland. Particularly striking is their strong representation in two examined shops: at the Frederic Chopin Museum (National Fryderyk Chopin Institute) and the Royal Castle in Warsaw. In the first case bad taste is particularly striking when compared to the artistic merits of the works of the great Polish Romantic composer. Such an offer infantilises the person of Chopin and changes him into a national gadget, increasing the distance from becoming acquainted with the uniqueness of his art.

The example of the Royal Castle in Warsaw is especially controversial. Alongside nonsensical *bric à brac* sprinkled with

the national flag and eagle (one may wonder whether this is not a case of insulting national symbols) we discover in the shop also clothes produced by the “Red is bad” makers, whose political (extreme rightist and nationalistic) affiliations are universally known.<sup>15</sup> The national status of the Royal Castle is understandable, but it seems that upon each stage of its activity it should define and represent the concept of the nation while referring to tolerance and world outlook pluralism. Public cultural institutions should not support ideological narrations opting for division and confrontation.

Summing up this chapter it must be said that, generally speaking, museums work together with shops as regards the creation of their offer and image. Nonetheless, in certain cases museums not only co-operate insufficiently but do not counteract negative practices. Without collaboration, supervision over contents or the enforcement of obligations assumed by the leasee, shop merchandise, as a rule, ends up satisfying unsophisticated tastes and dubious social needs.

Visual surveys produced both positive examples of shops managed by leasees and negative ones of shops administered by museums. Everything depends on persons directly and indirectly involved in running a museum shop. Here the crucial element is the attitude of the institution and the feeling of responsibility on the part of managers involved in the selection of offered goods.

## Summary

The above-cited abbreviated three aspects of the functioning of museum shops in Poland do not deplete the complexity of the topic. The analysis conducted by the author as part of her Postgraduate Museum Studies in Warsaw pertained also to formal-organisational problems (i.a. the selection and competence of the staff, the manner of locating the shop within the organisational structure of the institution, the profits and dangers of co-operating with leasees, the selection of commodities) and remaining



9. A teddy bear with a Chopin's print on its front and a fridge magnet with an inept reproduction of an icon monument among other items of similar type offered by the shop of the Fryderyk Chopin Museum (the Fryderyk Chopin National Institute) in Warsaw



10. Clothes of the company “Red is bad” on offer of the museum shop inside the Royal Castle in Warsaw

(All photos E. Łongiewska-Wijas)



contentual-technical aspects, insufficiently discussed here. The latter include the adaptation of historical and contemporary space for the purpose of a museum shop, outfitting (interior design, furniture, lights), the production and selection of exclusive and collector's items, marketing, promotion, and the application of new media in creating the shop's image. In contrast to a holistic publication this article did not deal with the budget and the significance of financial results gained by the shop.

The selection of topics presented in the article: the expansion of the functions of the shop, ways of situating it within the building, and the merchandise on sale was the outcome of two reasons. First, it demonstrated the applied research methods, chiefly questionnaires, visual surveys, and interviews. Secondly, those three domains are of particular importance for Polish museums at this precise moment.

For at least a decade it has been possible to note growing interest in museums, which are becoming important centres fashioning identity and enjoy the attention of politicians representing all options. The emergence of new museums is becoming intensified and museum professionals predict that this tendency will continue in coming years. For those reasons, it is crucial already upon the stage of emergence, expansion or modernisation to take into account the presence of a museum shop and its multi-functional character stressed at the onset – it is a trade space but also a place that

engages the recipient by stirring his collector's passions and guaranteeing the possibility of expanding knowledge; finally, it is a zone of relaxation and chilling out after having toured the exhibitions. In turn, an awareness of the impact exerted by the shop can offer the latter an opportunity to participate in the realisation of the museum's programme and render it a partner in attaining the goals of the institution. An ill-chosen offer and unsuitably trained staff – those are the two elements that can compromise not only the image of the shop but also that of the museum as a whole. Keep in mind that the shop is often the last stage of the visitor's presence in a museum. The impression that he takes with him after spending time in the shop often determines the final assessment of a museum tour. A carelessly arranged and unskilfully managed shop can lay waste work performed by curators and departments of promotion and social communication.

New museology has re-evaluated the position held by the recipient in the museum, contributed to a rising awareness of the cultural and systemic embroilment of the institution, inspired (self) critical reflection, and appreciated the significance of the educational function. In a world dominated by a constant stimulation of consumption it is worthwhile for museums to make conscious use of instruments offered by the museum shop. The effect of research confirmed that in this particular domain the majority of Polish museums are still awaiting a breakthrough.

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## Przypisy

<sup>1</sup> I conducted this research as a student of Postgraduate Museum Studies at the University of Warsaw under the supervision of Grażyna Bastek, Ph.D. In 2017 I examined for the purpose of my Ph.D. thesis a total of 27 shops in 22 museums: 21 shops in 16 Polish museums and six shops in six German museums – a point of reference and a context for particular aspects and functional solutions. I applied three methods: a 30-page questionnaire addressed to persons responsible for museum shops in Polish institutions (filled questionnaires were returned by 15 shops, i.e. 70% by those examined, while six museums did not send back their questionnaires), visual surveys (pertaining to the majority of Polish museums and six German ones), and an interview held with museum directors (I met five directors of selected Polish museums). I included a complete analysis of the topic in a publication totalling some 250 standard typewritten pages. The completed questionnaires (more than 400 A4 pages) constitute a valuable source of information. Owing to objective limitations this article is an account of a small part of the analyses and conclusions. Knowledge obtained in the course of research has been confronted with professional literature in English.

<sup>2</sup> Economic analysts have noticed a tendency for recreational functions in large-area shopping malls to become more significant. In a summary of the year 2017 Adam Roguski, an economic publicist writing for "Rzeczpospolita", referred to, i.a. analyses conducted by one of the advisory firms on the commercial real estate market: First, [analysts of Savills Polska identified that] *trade centres are changing into social galleries. Large objects are turning from places where shopping is done to places where one spends time. The expansion of gastronomy and entertainment is noticeable. This trend encompasses also traditional office buildings, which are starting to create relaxation zones*; A. Roguski, Rynek jest atrakcyjny, ale będzie się zmieniać, in: "Rzeczpospolita" 22 December 2017, no. 297 (10935), p. N7.

<sup>3</sup> *Słownik wyrazów obcych*, PWN, Warszawa 2002, p. 952.

<sup>4</sup> Paradoxically, trade centres and museums share a single feature – both bring to mind fatigue, which is a "side effect" of the realisation of targets via excess, intensity of experiences, enormity of knowledge (museums), and intrusiveness of impulses (shopping centres). At the same time, both struggle against it, because a totally "exhausted" visitor or client can prove to be irretrievably lost. In this manner malls and museums containing spaces intended for leisure and relaxation can be treated as sites of "modernity" on a micro scale, as understood by, i.a. Marek Krajewski in "Kultura Współczesna": *The essence of modernity, independently of which phase of its development we have in mind, is activism, the fetishisation of activity violating the balance that we then attempt to restore via successive activity. (...) [This syndrome] is a characteristic feature of the civilisational formation of interest to us. Its inseparable aspect is exhaustion, both as its product and a demon, whose overcoming is one of the most prominent goals. (...) While changing, modern societies pass from recurring phases of a struggle with tiredness and the elimination of the effects of those clashes, which bring new forms of exhaustion*; M. Krajewski, Wprowadzenie, in: Zmęczenie, M. Krajewski (ed.), "Kultura Współczesna" 2016, no. 3, p. 16.

<sup>5</sup> M. A. Velez, deputy director for communication and development at the Museum of Modern Art in Warsaw, fragment of a statement made in the course of a meeting, Warsaw 16 June 2017.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>7</sup> Additional natural light in the hall is possible thanks to a glass construction on the roof.

<sup>8</sup> Dr hab. P. Oszczanowski, director of the National Museum in Wrocław, fragment of a conversation held in the course of a meeting, Wrocław 19 May 2017.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibidem*.



- <sup>10</sup> Historical Museum of the City of Cracow, POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews in Warsaw, Gdynia City Museum, National Museum in Wrocław, Warsaw Uprising Museum, MOCAK Museum of Contemporary Art in Cracow, Silesian Museum in Katowice, Wrocław Contemporary Museum, Royal Castle in Warsaw.
- <sup>11</sup> The need for more in-depth knowledge about the exhibition and the problems dealt by it, even if only a willingness to purchase a souvenir, will probably appear – if it is to emerge at all – after seeing the exhibition and not when the visitor is still unfamiliar with it. This is confirmed by the premises of an attractive exhibition formulated by Robert Sullivan (National Museum of Natural History in Washington). One of those premises claims that an exhibition should not expend a given problem but provoke towards in-depth knowledge. [Multimedia presentation in the course of a lecture given on 11 June 2017, Bartek Podlewski, Postgraduate Museum Studies at the University of Warsaw]. A shop supplied with suitable publications should be the first reliable source of meeting those needs.
- <sup>12</sup> Gdynia City Museum, National Museum in Gdańsk – Department of Ancient Art, National Museum in Szczecin – Museum of Regional Traditions, National Museum in Szczecin in Wały Chrobrego Street, National Museum in Warsaw, National Museum in Wrocław, Museum of King Jan III's Palace at Wilanów, Warsaw Uprising Museum, Wrocław Contemporary Museum, Royal Castle in Warsaw – Museum. The Residence of Kings and the Republic of Poland.
- <sup>13</sup> Paweł Jaskanis, director of the Museum of King Jan III's Palace at Wilanów, fragment of a conversation held in the course of a meeting, Warsaw 8 June 2017.
- <sup>14</sup> See, i.a. John Prescott in: *Successful Retailing for Smaller Museums*, a guidebook issued in 2017 by the Association of Independent Museums. This publication, accessible directly on the Internet, contains numerous practical recommendations, whose part can be applied in Poland: <https://www.aim-museums.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/Successful-Retailing-2017.pdf> [accessed on: 1 January 2018].
- <sup>15</sup> "Red is bad" co-operates with, i.a. the Narodowcy.net portal in a campaign aimed against the European Union by declaring: "*Red is bad*" always was, is, and shall be against the European Union in its present-day form (...), <https://www.redisbad.pl/projekt-nie-jest-finansowany-ze-srodkow-ue> [accessed on: 1 July 17].

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