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Arts & Humanities
Research Council



Appendix 1

‘Jerzy Grotowski: Theatre and Beyond’

An Exhibition

Exhibition Rationale

This exhibition aims to recall the spirit which animated the performances of Jerzy Grotowski’s company from its beginning in the 1950s until the 1980s, covering the period of its productions and its subsequent development during the ‘Paratheatre’ phase (in the 1970s) and beyond, including a focus on the ‘Theatre of Sources’ and connections with Indian culture.

This will be the largest most comprehensive collection of material ever shown in public. It builds on an exhibition organized by Wrocław’s Grotowski Institute and presented at the Polish Cultural Institute in Rome in 2006, by also including a reconstruction of the set of *The Constant Prince*, costumes and props from different productions, with a special emphasis on *The Constant Prince*, including further rare pieces such as colour pictures of that performance and photos from the last performance *Apocalypsis cum figuris*, as well as scenes from the lives of the laboratory members. It will also include a complete collection of original posters and leaflets from the post-theatrical phase. A special section, commissioned for this exhibition, will present new pictures by photographer Francesco Galli of the places and the protagonists of the Theatre of Sources. Screenings will show films, video and documentaries on or connected to Grotowski’s work.

Scenic Space

The importance of this exhibition derives from the revolutionary impact that the works of Grotowski’s Teatr Laboratorium had all over the world, which changed forever our way of thinking about and making theatre. One of the clearest and most influential results of Grotowski’s research was the continuous modification of the spatial relations between actors and spectators, among the spectators, and between the actors themselves. This will clearly be presented in the exhibition with examples from early productions such as *Orpheus*, *Shakuntala*, *Dziady*, *Kain* and finally *Kordian*, set in a psychiatric hospital

where the spectators were configured as patients, continuing with later pieces such as *The Tragical History of Doctor Faustus*, where the spectators were guests at Faustus' last supper. The scaled down reconstruction of the set of *The Constant Prince* will enable those attending the exhibition to experience the practical consequences of this innovative approach.

Acting and Ritual

Revolutionary concepts of the performer as a 'holy actor' and performance as a 'secular ritual' will be made clear by the film screenings and pictures illustrating that icon of twentieth century theatre Ryszard Cieślak at work on and as *The Constant Prince*. Documents, photographs, costumes and further material will explain the genesis of famous productions such as *Akropolis* and *Apocalypsis cum figuris*. Photos of scenes from the laboratory members' lives will help contextualise the theatre work, providing insights into the group who changed twentieth century theatre practice and thinking.

Beyond Theatre

Grotowski's process of experimenting with space and through actor-spectator communication changed with the paratheatrical projects, which developed a new approach called 'Active Culture'. This will be examined through a collection of posters from this period, which were carefully designed for specific projects and purposes, and which by themselves represent a distinctive body of artistic work, beyond being mere advertising or marketing tools. Francesco Galli's set of photographs, commissioned specially for the exhibition, will give a concrete and creative account of the places where the 'Theatre of Sources', research into the sources of creativity, happened in contact with the natural environment. It will also depict some of the artists involved, showing a link between the past and the present traces of the work.

Films

As well as photographs, sketches and posters, we will present video and film materials on the laboratory and related work. A rare video of a vigil made in India after Grotowski's death will represent the evidence of his relationship with the people and the culture of India, as manifested by his last wish of being cremated and having his ashes spread in the holy mountain of Arunachala, in the region of Madras.

Venues and Logistics

The exhibition will be part of POLSKA!YEAR in the UK 2009, organised by the Institute of Adam Mickiewicz, Warsaw, who have provided funding support, as well as part of the Year of Grotowski celebrations organised by the Grotowski Institute, Wrocław. The exhibition will be inaugurated during the International Conference hosted by the British Grotowski Project at the University of Kent at Canterbury from May-June

2009, the culmination of a three year project funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council. We also hope to tour the exhibition either before or after this period to:

- **Aberystwyth, Wales in the spaces of CPR, the Centre for Performance Research, 25.05 – 08.06**
- **Canterbury, BritishGrotowski Project, University of Kent, 10-21.06**
- **London, at the National Theatre foyer, 14.08-25.09**

Exhibition Materials - Draft

SETS AND ARTEFACTS

The Constant Prince reconstructed set:

- central podium – approx. 185x150 cm
- palisade – 9 elements 175x100 cm each
- bench – approx. 200 cm long
- 3 podiums (to place under the bench) – approx 100x100 cm, approx 100 cm high
- stairs - approx. 100 cm high.

Akropolis set elements:

- 3 pipes
- 1 wheelbarrow
- 5 boots
- 1 bathtub
- 1 central box – approx. 200x200 cm, 80 cm high

10 costumes from Orpheus, Shakuntala, The Constant Prince, Apocalypsis cum figuris and Evangelie

3 sticks from Apocalypsis cum figuris of which 2 are white (first version)

1 red blanket from The Constant Prince

LEAFLETS AND BOOK

1 original edition of the book Towards a Poor Theatre

3 programmes for Akropolis, The Constant Prince and Apocalypsis cum figuris + 2 leaflets of the Centre for Performance Research from the paratheatrical period + Grotowski's Holiday text

IMAGES (apart from the set of The Constant Prince, placed at the centre of the space, all items are exhibited following the chronological order of the phases of *Grotowski's work*)

First section: Theatre of Productions

1. 10 photo portraits of the actors of Teatr Laboratorium
2. 12 original posters of the performances - 110x80 cm each.
3. 4 photographs of Orpheus
4. 4 photographs of Cain
5. 1 map of the stars from which the set of Cain has been created
6. 8 sketches of costumes for Cain

7. 4 photographs of Mystery Bouffe
8. 11 photos and designs for performances: *Shakuntala*, *Forefathers' Eve*, *Kordian*, *Dr. Faust*, *The Constant Prince* 70x50 cm; 5 photocopies of Gurawski's designs for *Forefathers' Eve* and *Dr. Faustus* – 60x40 cm; 2 copies of Gurawski's designs for *Dr. Faustus* – 110x70 cm; 3 photocopies of Gurawski's designs for *Dr. Faustus* and *Shakuntala* – 50x40 cm; 13 original drawings by Gurawski (already framed) of which three are big (for *Forefather's Eve* and *Shakuntala*); 12 photocopies of Gurawski's drawings for *The Constant Prince* – 40x30 cm; 1 photo from *Akropolis* 100x70 cm + 4 more smaller photos; 4 photos of *Study on Hamlet*
9. 20 photos of *The Constant Prince* (of which 11 are coloured)
10. 10 photos of *Apocalypsis cum figuris* by Buscarino

Second section: Paratheatre

11. 13 posters of paratheatrical activities

Third section: Theatre of Sources and After

12. 4 photographs of participants at the Theatre of Sources sessions in Wrocław
13. 12 new photographs by Galli
14. 1 photo of the house of Brzezinka
15. 1 photo of the work space in Irvine
16. 1 photo of the work space in Pontedera
17. 2 photographs of Thomas Richards and Mario Biagini and *Action*
18. 1 photo of the holy mountain of Arunachala
19. 6 Films (3 TV screens with 3 multi-DVD players with 2 headphones each). The films are: **FIRST SECTION:** *Akropolis/The Constant Prince* – **SECOND SECTION:** *Acting Therapy/Vigil* – **THIRD SECTION:** *An Attempt of a Portrait/Video of the vigil in India* by Galli

Where specified, the dimensions given concern the size of the frames, not the actual objects.

The logic of the exhibition follows Grotowski's work as described by himself as a chain, which starts with the Theatre of Production and ends with the last realizations. Thus according to the space available, they can be laid out as a chain or in a circular way. At the centre of the space the set of *The Constant Prince* represents the synthesis and the highest point of the artistic research reached by Grotowski and the members of *Teatr Laboratorium*. Symbolically at the centre of the set the original red blanket of *The Constant Prince* will be placed, an iconic image of the twentieth century theatre.

Three texts, one for each section, as well as the films and the documentaries shown in loops, together with brief descriptions of the items will all help explain the exhibition.

