

The Grotowski Institute

Wrocław

Idea: Jarosław Fret, Grzegorz Ziółkowski

January 2007

Establishing the Grotowski Institute

On 28th of December 2006 the Centre for Study of Jerzy Grotowski's Work and for Cultural and Theatrical Research (the Grotowski Centre) was transformed into the Grotowski Institute. The name of the new institute refers to that of Grotowski's theatre that operated at 27 Rynek-Ratusz in Wrocław between 1965 and 1984. Grotowski added the name Institute for Studies of the Method of Acting (in 1970 abbreviated to the Actor's Institute) to the name Laboratory Theatre ("of 13 Rows" until beginning of 1967 when this part was dropped off) at the time when he decided to carry out his work in Wrocław (in the mid-1970s another change of this name into the Laboratory Institute was made but not finalized in a formal way). Such a solution enabled him to conduct "practical studies on technical principles of theatre art, focused on the creative technique of an actor" and relieved him of the necessity of producing performances. This enabled Grotowski to strengthen and expand his research and studio work, which greatly contributed to the historical transformation of 20th century theatre.

The present change of the name from the Grotowski Centre to the Grotowski Institute marks a realigning, expanding and developing of the institution's programmes.

The 18-year history of the Centre for Study of Jerzy Grotowski's Work and for Cultural and Theatrical Research (the Grotowski Centre) has included ventures that have confronted specific challenges laid down by the Polish artist's creative practice. The Grotowski Institute will continue the line of work currently run by the Grotowski Centre and, in addition, will put more emphasis on the following aspects of its activities:

- education,
- promotion and producing,
- publishing.

The Grotowski Institute plans to emphasize equally all avenues of its programme, since it is only by focusing more on education and artistic activities that it will have the opportunity to keep, in the long term, the spirit of a place that is *living* – initiating and stimulating the growth of a young generation of artists and people of culture. The newly founded Grotowski Institute shall be the successor of the work and property of the Grotowski Centre, while maintaining the nature of an organization which leads ventures in the domains of culture, art and education, based on a variety of forms of activities.

Main Lines of Activities of the Grotowski Institute

Collaboration with Workcenter of Jerzy Grotowski and Thomas Richards

In its 20 years of activity, Workcenter of Jerzy Grotowski and Thomas Richards (Pontedera, Italy) has pushed back theatre's boundaries and has conducted an unparalleled research into

alternative potentialities of performing arts. The Grotowski Institute will, through the support of the City of Wrocław, act as the fundamental partner and coordinating agent in the frame of Workcenter's project *Horizons*. This project will extend the contact that has already taken place between Workcenter, the City of Wrocław and the Grotowski Centre throughout the Workcenter projects *Tracing Roads Across* (2003-2006) – backed by a network of cultural operators from five different countries – and *New Stagiaires Program* (2005-2006), both of which were supported by the Wrocław Municipality.

Through its support of *Horizons*, the Grotowski Institute will provide a meeting point in Poland with Workcenter of Jerzy Grotowski and Thomas Richards by periodically hosting the ongoing Workcenter research led by its Artistic Director, Thomas Richards. Jerzy Grotowski moved to Pontedera, Italy, from the USA at the invitation of the Centro per la Sperimentazione e la Ricerca Teatrale (now: Fondazione Pontedera Teatro), its director Roberto Bacci and Carla Pollastrelli, establishing Workcenter of Jerzy Grotowski in 1986. Grotowski began working with Richards, whom he would eventually call his “essential collaborator,” while still in California in the final stage of his Objective Drama research. Grotowski invited the young actor to accompany him to Italy, where Richards became a work-leader at Workcenter and a driving force in the research entitled *Art as Vehicle*. In 1996, Grotowski changed the name of Workcenter to Workcenter of Jerzy Grotowski and Thomas Richards acknowledging the unique importance of their collaboration. In this final phase of his life's research, Grotowski was concerned with transmission: “The nature of my work with Thomas Richards has the character of ‘transmission;’ to transmit to him that to which I have arrived in my life: the *inner* aspect of the work.” Prior to his death, Grotowski had passed the main responsibility of leadership of the practical research to Richards. And since Grotowski's passing in 1999, Richards has led Workcenter, continuing and developing its research. Mario Biagini, a key member of Workcenter team since shortly after its founding, is from 2003 its Associate Director.

Project *Horizons* (2007-2009) will bring Workcenter of Jerzy Grotowski and Thomas Richards to Wrocław for artistic residencies of three months each year for the length of the project's duration. *Horizons* will see the realization in Wrocław of the following forms of Workcenter's activities:

- internal Workcenter research,
- presentations of Workcenter's performative opuses,
- Workcenter conferences, seminars, and work meetings,
- Forum of Exchange with Workcenter (exchanges of work between Workcenter team and theatre groups from Poland, as well as Central and Eastern Europe),
- documentation of Workcenter research (potentially including video, film, photography and written documentation),
- publishing (Internet, e-mail newsletters).

The Educational Dimension of the Grotowski Institute

The educational dimension of the Institute will include the formulation and realization of educational programs addressed to students of cultural and theatre studies from Poland and abroad. The specifics of these programs will be based on a close connection between theoretical classes and work sessions. In this way, the idea of a holistic education in and through the arts will be fulfilled. Such a proposal fits in with the growing tendency towards the self-contained shaping of curricula at universities as a part of inter-departmental and interdisciplinary education, as well as towards the support of postgraduate education. It is worth noting that the tradition of the Laboratory Theatre of Jerzy Grotowski that included studio work, trainee education, and the

presentation of research results in the form of performances, can be exemplary in this domain. Additionally, the Grotowski Institute's activity in this area is an opportunity to create a counterpart to the increasing commercialisation of university education in Europe and in our country.

The core element of the Grotowski Institute's educational activity in 2007 and 2008 will be *Ateliers Source Techniques – Sources of Techniques*, consisting of series of practical and theoretical work sessions addressed to actors, musicians, singers, dancers, and theatre people. The Institute will also run guest lectures, video projections, practical seminars, and book-related meetings. This aspect will also be realised through workshops (including those led by actors from the Laboratory Theatre: Rena Mirecka and Zygmunt Molik) as well as through the *Openings* cycle, which includes meetings with secondary school and university students, such as *Theatre A-Grade* (addressed to secondary school pupils from Wrocław and Lower Silesia in March), *Exchange of Works* (addressed to students of theatre studies from Poland and Europe), or *Open Doors* (for students from Wrocław universities, at the beginning of the academic year).

Based on these experiences, after 2009 the Grotowski Institute will open the Academy of Theatrical Anthropology run in cooperation with universities from Poland, the United Kingdom, and Italy. An invited circle of practitioners and theorists from these centres, the Grotowski Institute's own personnel, and the close link between artistic and publishing projects conducted simultaneously by the Grotowski Institute, will all provide a strong basis for the execution of this innovative programme. Resources in the form of spaces for work, a multimedia reading room, and the archive will further support the educational process.

The Promotional and Producing Aspect of the Grotowski Institute

The Grotowski Institute will undertake duties in this field in answer to an idea that Jerzy Grotowski expressed in his speech on receiving an honorary degree from Wrocław University in 1991. In his lecture, the creator of the Laboratory Theatre pointed out that theatre masters do not need support, but instead young artists do, as a priority. This statement aligns with a proposal formulated by Tadeusz Burzyński in 1988, i.e. before the Grotowski Centre was established. This critic wrote that such a place would 'provide patronage to the theatrical or paratheatrical undertakings of young, unconventional, exploratory creators; it would provide several years of sponsorship to some of them, in order to give a creative kickstart to those who find it difficult to or simply cannot find a place in traditional theatre structures.' The Grotowski Centre has already taken up such a challenge by supporting the work of such artists, including: Farma v Jeskyni Theatre (Prague, the Czech Republic), ZAR Theatre Association (Wrocław), Song of the Goat Theatre (Wrocław), Chorea Theatre Association and the Ancient Orchestra, and such artists as Maud Robart (France) or Natalka Polovynka (Lviv, Ukraine). However, a regular and systematic answer to this challenge is a current necessity due to the commercialisation of culture and its rapid homogenisation and, so to speak, its *media-genisation*.

Artistic and promotional activities will include the constant support of independent theatre in Central and Eastern Europe, structured through long-term, three or four-year projects. The Grotowski Institute will support three (four at the most) groups, providing them with administrative and logistical help in exchange for the representation of the Grotowski Institute and the City of Wrocław in Poland and abroad. Artists from the promoted groups will also be invited to cooperate in the educational field. The quality of their artistic work will be the basic criterion for selection.

It should be highlighted that such an enterprise will also be an extension of the *Eastern Line Programme*, the first stage of which took place as a festival in 2005 during the 14th session of the International School of Theatre Anthropology (ISTA) founded by Eugenio Barba. This featured artists from Central and Eastern Europe, a region where extremely interesting theatre phenomena are currently happening, brought about by determined artists reacting keenly to the extreme changes in the political system, and who are seeking cultural identification by confronting traditions, and skilfully using the language of symbol and metaphor. The most serious impediment to these activities is the lack of any systematic solutions for their support. The actions of the Grotowski Institute in this field will be an answer to the diversification of the ways in which theatre operates and the needs of an audience in the new social and cultural situation. By taking on these promotional and producing tasks the Grotowski Institute aims to establish exemplary models for providing support to young independent artists.

Apart from providing several years of sponsorship for selected groups, we will host the regular presentation of work by groups eligible according to this *Eastern Line* idea, i.e. theatres from Central and Eastern Europe who resist commercialisation (e.g. Farma v Jeskyni Theatre, Plavo Pozoriste and Kanun Theatre from Serbia, Oleg Zhukovsky from Russia). Every year, one of the permanent foreign associates of the Grotowski Institute, including representatives of institutions from Western Europe who take part in the joint European projects (such as Teatro Atalaya from Spain, the Centre for Performance Research from Wales, Odin Teatret from Denmark, Teatro Potlach and Fondazione Pontedera Teatro from Italy, Alma Kalma from Greece, and Theaterlabor from Germany) will be invited to join this group. Thus the Grotowski Institute in Wrocław will assume the role of being a place for meeting, interaction, and exchange.

In 2007-2009, the Grotowski Institute will promote artistic and research projects of theatre groups such as: Maisternia Pisni (Lviv, Ukraine) and the ZAR Theatre Association (Wrocław, Poland).

Publishing projects of the Grotowski Institute

Publishing projects will be carried out by the Grotowski Institute Publishing House, which will significantly extend the Grotowski Centre Publishing Department's current scope of activities. An analysis of titles published from 2004-2006 shows that the Centre has realized a distinct editorial strategy – on the one hand, in relation to works by renowned contemporary theatre artists: books were published by Eugenio Barba and Peter Brook, as well one devoted to Mei Lanfang, the remarkable Beijing Opera performer; on the other – an album about Rena Mirecka, the Laboratory Theatre actress, or an Italian anthology consisting of post-1989 texts by Polish authors on Jerzy Grotowski. The publishing projects focused on the work of Grotowski and theories developed by outstanding people of the contemporary theatre. These subjects will be continued in the editorial series *Grotowski: Problems and Tasks* and *The Path of Theatre and Culture*.

The *Grotowski: Problems and Tasks* series will include articles that show the reception of Jerzy Grotowski's creative work: in Poland, which will be done through Tadeusz Burzyński's texts collated in the volume *Mój Grotowski (My Grotowski)*, and a three-volume series titled *Pełen guślarstwa obrzęd świętokradzki (Full of Sorcery a Sacrilegious Rite)*. The first volume, *Misterium zgrozy i urzeczzenia (Misterium tremendum and fascinans)*, will include reprints of the most important articles about Grotowski and the Laboratory Theatre's performances. The other volumes will refer to active culture and Theatre of Sources (vol. 2), and the contexts of Grotowski's work (vol. 3). The Italian reception of Grotowski's later activities (Theatre of Sources and Art as Vehicle) will be represented by works by Antonio Attisani, Sista Bramini, Chiara Guglielmi, and Renata Molinari – to be published in 2007 and 2008 – thus filling a crucial gap in Polish literature on this subject.

The series will also include publications by the Grotowski Institute's research staff, as a result of research projects (including those devoted to Ludwik Flaszen, the Laboratory Theatre from 1965-1970, Theatre of Sources, and Jerzy Grotowski's artistic activity after he left Poland in 1982). There will also be supplementary albums documenting the Laboratory Theatre performances, including a monograph on *Apocalypsis cum figuris* with photographs by the renowned artist Maurizio Buscarino.

The aspiration of the *Path of Theatre and Culture* series, apart from the presentation of thinking by renowned theatre directors such as Eugenio Barba, Julian Beck, Peter Brook, Joseph Chaikin, Jacques Lecoq, Włodzimierz Staniewski and Tadashi Suzuki, will be: to make the achievements of contemporary studies based on the study of theatre available to Polish readers (see Richard Schechner's *Performance Studies: an Introduction* published by the Centre in Polish in 2006) and to popularise knowledge about key directors (e.g. the anthology on Evgeny E. Vakhtangov, edited by Katarzyna Osińska to be published in 2007). The series will also include the works of Polish theatre scholars who interpret the line of tradition in which Grotowski's work can be situated – e.g. *Polski teatr przemiany (Polish Theatre of Transformation)* by Dariusz Kosiński from the Jagiellonian University. A special place will also be reserved for titles that – although not in the theatre studies canon – have yet to find a Polish publisher. These include *Stanislawski in Rehearsal* by Vasily O. Toporkov and *Święty Bacchus (Saint Bacchus)* by Alexis Solomos (a book devoted to the Byzantine theatre – which is unique worldwide in terms of literature on this subject).

An international publishing cooperation initiated in 2006 as part of a *Polish Theatre: Tradition of Transformation* undertaking with the Welsh Centre for Performance Research will promote Polish theatre science in Anglo-Saxon countries. The project, which is planned to last several years, will result in English editions of works by Polish performance anthropologists and theatre historians, as well as texts by Juliusz Osterwa.

Additionally, the Grotowski Institute will run a theatre library that will distribute Polish and foreign works.

The Site for the Grotowski Institute

The current site in Wrocław, the historical space of the Laboratory Theatre (27 Rynek-Ratusz) will be preserved and kept mainly for archival and documentary activity, as well as for related research. It will host the Grotowski Institute's Archive fulfilling its duties in five Divisions: Paper Documentation, Mechanical Documentation, Museum Collections, Manuscripts, and Access; and two Workrooms: Bibliography and Chronicle. The Access Division will include a multimedia reading room, a permanent exhibition in the Laboratory Theatre's historical space, and the theatre cinema. The most important change will concern the spatial separation of the Access Division from other divisions and workrooms. Guest lectures, talks on the subject of theatre studies publications, and smaller conferences will be organised in the current site. The centre will also have a bookshop with theatre publications.

Long-term artistic undertakings and workshops of a studio nature will mostly be carried out in Brzezinka near Oleśnica, the forest base of the Grotowski Institute.

The Grotowski Institute has acquired a new space at 30/32 Na Grobli in Wrocław for the fulfilment of its extended activities and in particular for the collaboration with Workcenter of Jerzy Grotowski and Thomas Richards in its project *Horizons*. This new place will be renovated in

2007-2008. It will serve mainly as Workcenter's site when Workcenter team is resident in Poland. When Workcenter is not present, the place will host performances and larger conferences as well as the educational programme of the Grotowski Institute. It will also house the Grotowski Institute's Publishing House with its storage rooms.

The Year of Grotowski 2009

The new Grotowski Institute will organise the programme *The Year of Grotowski 2009*. 2009 is the 10th anniversary of Jerzy Grotowski's death, the 50th anniversary of the taking control of the Theatre of 13 Rows in Opole (later the Laboratory Theatre) by Ludwik Flaszen and Jerzy Grotowski, and the 25th anniversary of the Laboratory Theatre's self-dissolution.

The Grotowski Institute works towards associating UNESCO with the 50th anniversary of establishing the Laboratory Theatre, in connection with *The Year of Grotowski 2009*. The following people will be invited to serve on The Year of Grotowski 2009 Committee: Prof. Kazimierz Grotowski (the artist's brother), Ludwik Flaszen (the closest collaborator with Grotowski at the Laboratory Theatre), as well as representatives of national, regional, and municipal authorities, remarkable artists, professors, heads of universities who awarded Grotowski with honorary degrees, and the heads of foundations who systematically supported his work.

When executing the *The Year of Grotowski 2009* programme, the Grotowski Institute addressed with propositions of cooperation such institutions as: the Centre for Performance Research (Wales), Centre International de Recherche Théâtrales (France), Fondazione Pontedera Teatro (Italy), the Institute of Polish Culture at Warsaw University, New York University (USA), Odin Teatret (Denmark), the University of Rome 'La Sapienza' (Italy), and the University of Kent (England).

The Year of Grotowski 2009 programme includes: an exhibition at the historical site of the Laboratory Theatre, the conference *The Worldwide Reception of Jerzy Grotowski's Work*, the practical seminar *Giving Voice in Wrocław* in cooperation with the Centre for Performance Research, the theatre festival *The World Should Be a Place of Truth* with many outstanding theatre artists, the practical seminar *Techniki źródłowe – źródła technik (Source Techniques – Sources of Techniques)*, and the conference *Kości mi wewnętrzne połamał...* (*He Has Broken My Internal Bones*) devoted to Grotowski's response to works by Juliusz Słowacki. Also in 2009, a series of books will be published, and a documentary material filmed that will aim to present the artist's achievements from a new perspective.

© The Grotowski Institute, Wrocław 2007

The Grotowski Institute

Rynek-Ratusz 27

50-101 Wrocław, Poland

ph./fax ++48 71 34 34 267

www.grotowski-institute.art.pl

www.grotcenter.art.pl

natalia@grotowski-institute.art.pl