



Workshop

Culture at the Crossroads of Cultures: Challenges and Experiences in Approaching the Past

July 20, August 3, 2013

Co-organizers:

Center for Urban History of East Central Europe (Ukraine, Lviv)

UJE - Ukrainian Jewish Encounter (Ottawa, Canada)

Polish Institute in Kyiv

"Hesed-Arieh" – Ukrainian Jewish Charity (Ukraine, Lviv)

Supervision:

Dr Mayhill Fowler (Stetson University) / Dr Sofia Dyak (Center for Urban History, Lviv)

Coordination

Dr Iryna Matsevko (Center for Urban History) / Oleksandra Hurvits ("Hesed-Arieh")

General Description:

What is the role of culture in a place shaped for centuries by diversity, co-existence and conflict? How it shaped life for centuries, before the violent disruption of the Second World War? What is the place of culture in contemporary societies where heritage is recognized as a profitable industry and diversity as a value required for EU membership? In particular, how do different formats, such as theater, literature, festival or film, shape our understanding of the multi-ethnic past and of conflicted narratives? By approaching the difficult past through such creative formats, how can we also address issues important for societies in the present? What are the possibilities and limits of cultural and artistic approaches to historical debates?

In this workshop we will not only look at how contemporary culture and arts use, reflect, and relate to the multi-cultural heritage, but examine the role of contemporary culture and arts in "coming to terms with the past," and dealing with "difficult history." Both scholars and practitioners will join the workshop bringing together experience from different countries, initiatives and backgrounds. Our general focus is the multiethnic past and multicultural heritage, the history of the communities destroyed during the Second World War and in the Holocaust, in post-war deportations and look at the region known as Galicia.

Each panel will focus on a specific genre: literature, theater, festival, and film. Panels will examine how each genre deals with themes related to diversity and the contested past, as well as how they incorporate findings and questions from scholarship or public discourse. Many of these cultural initiatives have a singular ethnic focus--whether a Jewish festival, or a Ukrainian theater piece, or a Polish novel.

To discuss these questions the workshop brings together artists and cultural activists involved in various initiatives dealing with the past and heritage of borderlands and multi-ethnic communities which lived there. Our audience will include but not be limited to young scholars and advanced students taking part in

the summer school “Jewish History and Multicultural Past of East Central Europe: Societies, Cultures and Heritage.” As our main focus is the question of how arts and culture reflect and relate to rich, diverse but also violent past of borderlands, we will invite people from Ukraine, Poland, Russia, and Israel to share personal experiences, present their projects and aim at fruitful and inspiring exchange of ideas and discussion.

The workshop will be held as part of the summer school “Jewish History and Multicultural Past of East Central Europe: Societies, Cultures and Heritage” and the festival LvivKlezFest: Jewish Culture Festival in Lviv. It will last two days. It will consist of presentations and public discussions. It is divided into four panels, with a moderator, presenters and discussants (researchers, cultural figures, representatives of public organizations and societies). For each panel we will reserve time to have Q&A session and a discussion. The workshop will also include the exhibition of Olena Fridman «Ukrainian ornament and Jewish symbols» (the courtyard of the Center for Urban History).

The workshop is open for the public.

Day One / Saturday / July 20, 2013

Literature at the Border: How Can Fiction Reflect and Rethink the Difficult Past?

18.30-20.30

While many historical books are published on the topic of war, it is often fiction that reaches the largest audience and has the broadest impact. Many imagine the fall of the Romanov Empire and the Civil War through Mikhail Bulgakov's *White Guard* or, more recently, in Ukraine through the novel *Black Raven* by Vasyl Shlyarovel about anti-Bolshevik Ukrainian resistance of the 1920s. In the Soviet Union the images of the emerging Soviet state and the Great Patriotic War were also largely shaped by works of fiction, such as *How Steel was Tempered*, and *Young Guard*, to name just a few.

Literature can have a special appeal in places radically changed by the war experience, like in borderland cities where states were changed, inhabitants expelled and killed, and new names were given: Breslau/Wrocław, Danzig/Gdansk, Lwow/Lviv, for example. Historical novels remain a popular and powerful format for understanding the past, such as the highly popular series of crime novels by Marek Krajewski on pre-war Breslau.

In this session we will have a chance to talk with Yuri Vynnychuk, the author of many novels in Ukrainian on historical topics, especially on the history of Lviv. His most recent novel *The Tango of Death* takes a personal lens to assess the events that changed the city forever: from Lwów/Lemberg/Lviv into Lviv/Lvov, from a city that was home to different national and religious communities to a place that became a grave to its large Jewish community and a lost home to its Polish inhabitants. Does this novel challenge existing stereotypes or construct new ones? Should we expect fiction to teach readers, to create myths, or to dispel myths?

Guest: Yuriy Vynnychuk, writer, author of “The Tango of Lviv”

Moderators: Katarzyna Kotynska (Institute of Slavonic Studies, Jagellonian University), **Roman Dubasevych** (cultural studies scholar, Greifswald/Lviv)

Invited literary critics and authors: Olena Haleta, Yurko Prokhasko, Svitlana Ukrayinets, Halyna Pahutiak, Albina Pozniakova, Tymofiy Havryliv, Ilko Lemko, Andriy Droyda.

Invited historians working on the inter-war period and the Second World War:

Tarik Cyril Amar (Columbia University)

Oleksandr Zaitsev (Ukrainian Catholic University)

Taras Martynenko (Lviv National University, PhD project daily experiences during WWII)

Petro Chorniy (historian, works on interethnic relations in the interwar Galicia).

Day Two / Saturday / August 3, 2013 / 11.00- 18.20

Films: Visualizing, Stereotyping or Challenging?

11.00-13.00

Podium Discussion

How can we transfer the entangled web of Polish-Jewish-Ukrainian relations and experiences during the interwar period and the Second World War into documentaries and fiction films? Does building a dramatic story require over-simplification, or can film challenge established opinions and extend existing frameworks of understanding the past? How does the emotion caused by visual presentation encourage or discourage a more inclusive attitude towards the past? During the summer school we will watch several films, including the recent Polish film *Poklosie*, inspired by Jan T. Gross' book; Agnieszka Holland's *In Darkness*, based on memoirs of Jewish survivors in Lwow, and *Three Stories of Galicia*, a documentary depicting the experience of the war in Galicia through the prism of individual lives in extreme conditions. Our major question will be: can film, as an expressive visual medium, address complicated topics to provoke social discussions or does it further establish clichés and stereotypes?

Moderator: Bohdan Shumylovych (Center for Urban History)

Speakers:

Prof. Serhiy Yekechyk, historian, University of Victoria, Canada, works on the medium of film and historical films as a specific genre in post-Communist Eastern Europe

Dr Vasyl Rasevych, historian, researcher at the Krypyakevych Institute of Ukrainian Studies; author of several publications on films and historical representations

Oleh Chorniy, a video and film director focusing on short film and documentaries. Worked at the Oleksandr Dovzhenko Film Studio

13.00 – 14.00 Lunch / buffet in the courtyard

Festivals: Mass Education or/through Mass Performance

14.00-16.00

Over the last two decades ethnic and poly-ethnic festivals have enjoyed wide popularity throughout East Central Europe, making it possible to experience varying formats, languages, and cultural traditions and immerse oneself in a multiform world, albeit one which is largely virtual. As of late, we have observed a particular “boom” in festivals of European culture and Ashkenazi “Klezmer” Music. In Warsaw, Cracow, Prague, and Budapest, this type of festival has moved rapidly from boutique beginnings to large-scale, trendsetting events attracting thousands from all over the world. Ruth Ellen Gruber underscores the dangers of the

“virtualizing” and “Disneylandizing” of cultural heritage through the vehicle of the festival. It also remains a point of dispute to what extent festivals are capable of (re)activating a given cultural heritage while also exploiting it for purposes of entertainment and financial profit. Conversely, festivals may play an educational role, stimulating a greater interest in the history of multiculturalism and elevating social consciousness regarding discrete cultural spheres, history, and our concept of cultural heritage.

During the discussion we will consider (considered) different festival approaches to representing our multicultural heritage, and their role in the rethinking of the past and the ‘polyphony’ of the public space. For as much as mono- and poly-ethnic festivals “reveal” cultural traditions, to what degree do they contribute to cultural stereotypes and reinforce extant cultural divisions? What role do festivals play in building bridges between past experience and present generations in the context of cultural and social discontinuity of East Central Europe? Is there sense for festivals to explore the more difficult chapters of our common past or is their role defined by the mere “celebration” of multiculturalism? Finally, should festivals which promote multicultural past concern themselves with the propagation of tolerance in contemporary society?

In these sessions we will enjoy the opportunity to meet with individuals involved in the festival movement: organizers, managers, and city administration officials. We will take (took) a particular look at Ukrainian (LvivKlezFest) and Polish (7@Nite, Synagogi Nocą) experience in conducting festivals promoting Jewish heritage and the search for new forms of representation. “Meridian Czernowitz” will provide a fascinating example of the incorporation of multicultural heritage into the “city of Literature” brand through the use of the festival approach.

Moderator: Anna Susak (Center for Urban History)

Speakers:

Lilia Shutiak, press secretary “Meridian Czernowitz” Festival (Chernivtsi, Ukraine).

Monica Elliot, project coordinator “7@Nite, Synagogi Nocą”, (Cracow, Poland)

Ada Dianova, director LvivKlezFest of Jewish Culture, Lviv, Ukraine

16.00-16.20 coffee & tea in the courtyard

Theater: Catharsis through Provocation and Performance?

16:20-18:20

The ethnic groups of Galicia—Poles, Ukrainians, and Jews—each had their own theater, their own buildings, repertoire, and theatrical traditions. Uncovering the way that a multi-ethnic society shaped those individual ethnic cultures is by now almost impossible. Still, several cultural initiatives have used theater as a way of recapturing the multi-ethnic past and/or as a way of exploring tensions between ethnic groups. How can theater build bridges between ethnic groups, or does it simply reinforce walls? How can theater—by its very nature not a mass medium—reach a larger audience? What about popular favorites, such as the adaptations of Sholem-Aleichem's Tevye stories as the Broadway musical *Fiddler on the Roof* or the Bohdan Stupka vehicle *Tevye-Molochnyk*? Do these works perpetuate stereotypes of Jews and Russian-Jewish relations, or can they provide a bridge to appreciating the multi-cultural past and accepting the Jewish past as part of the Ukrainian past?

Moderator: Prof. Mayhill Fowler (Stetson University)

Presenters:

Joanna Wichowska, editor of the theatre department in dwutygodnik.com, curator of the project East European Performing Arts Platform (Warsaw)

Serhiy Perekrest, stage-director (Kyiv)

Oksana Dudko, Center for Urban History / Drabyna Festival (Lviv)

Svitlana Oleshko, Arabesky Theater (Kharkiv)

19.00 „Janka,” a performance of Jewish amateur theatre «Debiut» (Hesed-Arieh) at the theatre for young audiences (Hnatiuka str, 11)