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FILM FESTIVALS IN ŁÓDŹ AS A MAIN COMPONENT OF URBAN CULTURAL TOURISM

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ABSTRACT. In the early 19th century Łódź became a huge centre of textile production. However, the transformations in Poland after 1989 led to the decline of this industry. At present the city is looking for new forms of development, such as services, including tourism and culture. One of the most important elements of the cultural function in Łódź are film festivals, based on over 50 year long tradition of film making in this city. The aim of this article is to present the film festivals organized in Łódź, which are a tourist asset and a kind of tourist product (an event). They are at the same time an element of cultural tourism, part of which is event tourism, connected with festivals and film tourism.

KEY WORDS: Poland, Łódź, film festivals, film tourism, postindustrial city.

INTRODUCTION

The article concerns selected film festivals organized in Łódź. They are cultural and entertainment events, which are currently an important part of the city's tourist offer. The contemporary literature on the subject mentions a particular type of tourism, called cultural tourism. It is defined as a set of tourists' behaviours, resulting from their genuine interest in cultural heritage, as well as their participation in the widely understood contemporary cultural life (Kowalczyk, 2008: 13).

In this sense, participation in festivals (1) should also be considered as an element of cultural tourism. Festivals are treated as a tourist asset of cities and regions, as well as a kind of tourist product, defined as an event product (Kaczmarek et al., 2010: 106–107). Moreover, a part of cultural tourism is event tourism, where the aim is the participation in cultural events, such as film festivals

(Von Rohrscheidt, 2008: 72). Many cities in Europe base the development of tourism on cultural festivals. An example of this approach is Edinburgh in the United Kingdom or Kraków in Poland. Another notion appearing in the literature on the subject is that of film and TV tourism as a form of cultural tourism. The aim here is to visit places connected with film and television productions – film locations, studios, houses, and sites related to film and TV makers. In recent years this kind of tourism has become increasingly popular, which is the result of the growing influence of television and cinema on human life (Smith, 2009: 162). Trips made in order to take part in film festivals are also treated as a form of film tourism (Beeton, 2005: 11).

FILM ŁÓDŹ

Łódź is inhabited by about 740 thousand people. In the early 19th century it became a huge centre of textile industry and as such prospered until the transformations in Poland, which occurred after 1989. When the textile industry declined, the city started to search for new ways to develop. The new areas of development included industry (household equipment, electronics) and services (including tourism and culture).

The tradition of film-making in Łódź, which began after World War II, is extremely important in the development of today's cultural function of the city. In 1948 the Higher Film School was founded in Łódź, which is undoubtedly the best school of this type in Poland and one of the most renowned in the world. Today it is called the Polish National Film, Television and Theatre School (Państwowa Wyższa Szkoła Filmowa, Telewizyjna i Teatralna PWSFTviT) (2) (Lemann, 1998: 180–181). In 1945 the Feature Film Studio (Wytwórnia Filmów Fabularnych WFF) was established, which had been the largest institution of this type in Poland until 1989. After 1989 it was transformed into the Łódź Film Centre (Łódzkie Centrum Filmowe), which to much regret did not survive the transformation period and went bankrupt. Two new private firms involved in film and television production were set up in its premises: TOYA cable TV, which also owns big sound studios working for film and television, and Opus Film. The latter is an independent Polish film production company (Kronenberg et al., 2010: 196–197).

After the war there also appeared the Educational Film Studio (1949) and the Se-Ma-For Studio (1956). The former one produced nature films, documentaries and popular science films. It still exists today as the Educational Films and Program Studio (Wytwórnia Filmów Oświatowych i Programów Edukacyjnych WFO). Se-Ma-For was the biggest Polish producer of puppet and film animation.

It still exists, with a museum displaying collections of animated film memorabilia (www.wfo.com.pl/, Kronenberg et al., 2010: 192–193).

It must be stressed that developing its cultural function, Łódź started to compete for the title of the European Capital of Culture 2016. An important part of this fight was the organization of film festivals. Unfortunately, at the preliminaries in 2010 Łódź was not approved by the international jury of experts and did not pass to the next round of the competition. This was most certainly caused by the problems regarding the most important film festival in Łódź – Plus Camerimage.

THE MAIN FILM FESTIVALS IN ŁÓDŹ (3)

Film festivals in Łódź are organized by the following institutions: the Charlie Cinema, Łódź Culture Centre (Łódzki Dom Kultury ŁDK), Educational Film and Program Studio, the Polish National Film, Television and Theatre School and the Museum of Cinematography.

The Charlie Cinema was established in Łódź in 1994 at 203/205 Piotrkowska Street. Since the very beginning it has been presenting ambitious films and has organized many art and film events. A body which operates at the Charlie Cinema is the Film Łódź Association (Stowarzyszenie Łódź Filmowa) (since 2000), whose aim is to integrate Łódź film circles and conduct film and art projects.

Among the main festivals organized by the Charlie Cinema is the ‘Off jak gorąco’ Festival of Independent Cinema. It presents contemporary films made by independent artists and is directed towards young film makers, both professional and amateur, working off the main (commercial) stream of the film industry. It is held every year in summer (since 2006). Another example of an event organized by the Charlie Cinema is The ‘Large Format’ Film Makers Festival (Festiwal Twórców Powiększenie). Since 1999 it has been an annual event, now held in October. The festival presents renowned cinema personalities (in ‘large format’), independent contemporary artists, as well as young film makers and debutants.

The Animated Film Festival ReAnimation is a different type of festival, devoted to amateur and professional forms of animation. The event has been organized every year in spring since 2004, at the Charlie Cinema. During the festival the organizers hold a competition for the best animated film, which is granted the Golden Snail Award. In July and August 2009 and 2010, the Charlie Cinema organized small-scale, free screenings of films, entitled The ‘Film-picking’ Summer Cinema Festival (Festiwal Kina Letniego Filmobranie). It was held on the premises of the postindustrial buildings in Łódź as a review of Polish and foreign cinematography.

In 2010 the most important event organized by the Charlie Cinema was the Cinergia Festival – the European Cinema Forum in Łódź. It was first organized in 1992 and in 2010 it had its 15th edition. It is held in November at the Charlie Cinema and other cinemas in Łódź, as a review of the major European film productions. The last edition included screenings of the best festival films in 13 cities and towns outside Łódź; the screenings were called the Cinergia Festival replicas.

The next important institution involved in organizing big film festivals in Łódź is Łódź Cultural Centre (Łódzki Dom Kultury – ŁDK). ŁDK is the largest cultural centre in the city, established in 1953. It promotes activities related to cinema, theatre, art, and education. The festivals organized by ŁDK include Polish Festival of Films about the Family (Ogólnopolski Festiwal Filmów o Rodzinie FOR). The idea behind it is to show a range of different kinds of documentaries and TV programs regarding the family. Polish productions are shown along with foreign films from France, Italy, Germany or Japan. The event has been held annually in Łódź since 2008, at the ŁDK cinema. The centre has also participated in organizing the interdisciplinary Dance Cinema Festival (Festiwal Kino Tańca) since 2001, held every two years in autumn. It presents dance films from all over the world, organizes dance and cinematography workshops, seminars, as well as a competition for the best Polish dance cinema films.

An interesting event combining film and travel is the ArtMediaTravel Festival (4), which is a combination of a festival and a competition, related first of all to the media and travelling. Its purpose is to present the Polish and foreign achievements regarding film, photography, as well as radio broadcasts, the Internet, music, and press, which deal with social, ethnic and travel issues. The originator and the moving spirit of this festival is Mirosław Olszycki, a traveler and author of travel books and films. The institutions organizing it are the ARKADIA Foundation and the Marvel Media Art Agency. The first festival was held in Łódź in 2001; so far there have been seven editions of the event, the latest one in April 2010.

The Włodzimierz Puchalski International Festival of Nature Films (5) is another Łódź festival organized by the WFO (Educational Film and Program Studio). It has been held regularly since 1980, in September. The event is combined with a competition and the idea behind it is to popularize Polish and international films about nature. The chief organizer is the WFO and other institutions, such as the ‘Film-Nature-Culture’ Association (Stowarzyszenie “Film-Przyroda-Kultura”), the Film Łódź Association (Stowarzyszenie Łódź Filmowa), ŁDK, and W. Puchalski Secondary School No. 7 in Łódź.

One of the most important institutions in Łódź involved in film-related activities is the Museum of Cinematography (6). It organizes one of the major

film events in Łódź – ‘The Man Under Threat’ Media Festival (Festiwal Mediów Człowiek w Zagrożeniu). The main aim of this festival is to present a review of professional and amateur film and radio documentaries. The material presented during the festival mainly regards pathologies, intolerance, problems arising from the political and economic transformation, politics, and other social problems. The event was first organized in 1990, first by ŁDK and later by the Museum of Cinematography.

The Leon Schiller Higher Film, Television and Theatre School organizes a very interesting event for film schools, called Mediaschool – the International Festival of Film and Television Schools (Mediaschool – Międzynarodowy Festiwal Szkół Filmowych i Telewizyjnych). It presents films made by students from all over the world and lasts three days. It was first organized in 1994. The festival includes a competition, as well as additional events, such as reviews of films from selected film schools, retrospective reviews, or presentations of film-making and television equipment (7).

PLUS CAMERIMAGE – THE INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL OF THE ART OF CINEMATOGRAPHY (CASE STUDY)

The last event we are going to discuss is Plus Camerimage – the International Film Festival of the Art of Cinematography. It is not held in Łódź any more, but let us present it briefly, considering its role in the cultural development of the city. Camerimage is an event devoted to cinematographers, which makes it one of very few festivals of this type in the world (8). It was also one of the most important festivals promoting Łódź as a city competing for the title of the European Capital of Culture 2016. Camerimage is organized by the TUMULT Foundation, established by Marek Żydowicz in Toruń. The history of the festival should be divided into three periods: Toruń, Łódź and Bydgoszcz. The first Camerimage Festival was held in Toruń in 1993. In 2000 due to a conflict with the city authorities, the event was moved to Łódź, where it was organized until 2009. It was the year when the plans of the city centre reconstruction were taking their final shape. The reconstruction was to include investments in culture. Among other things, there were plans to build two large buildings for the purposes of the Camerimage Festival. However, in 2010 the President of Łódź, Jerzy Kropiwnicki, who actively supported the festival and the investments, was dismissed from his post. As a result of the change of authorities, the investments were delayed and the new authorities and the Camerimage organizers came into severe conflict. Finally, in an atmosphere of scandal, Marek Żydowicz moved the festival to Bydgoszcz, where its next edition was held in 2010.

In June and July the author conducted a survey regarding Camerimage. 150 questionnaires were distributed among selected respondents in the centre of Łódź, 75% of whom were the inhabitants of the city and the remaining ones lived elsewhere. The questions regarded the knowledge of the Camerimage Festival, participation in the event and its role in the development of Łódź. The questionnaire also included questions about the conflict between the city authorities and the festival organizers. It must be stressed that the majority (93%) of the respondents were familiar with the festival, but only 23% took part in it. The respondents correctly identified the main aim of the festival (showing the cinematographers' contribution to film production), the name of the main award, the venue and the month when the event was held. Most respondents (52%) believed that the event had been first organized in Łódź; they were unaware of the actual venue (Toruń). They were also familiar with the name of Marek Żydowicz, which may have resulted from the fact that the conflict with the city authorities was widely commented by the media.

About 60% of the respondents knew about the plans to build new buildings for the purposes of Camerimage and 55% heard about the conflict between the city authorities and the festival organizers. As far as the causes of the conflict are concerned, most of the respondents pointed to financial reasons, while political reasons were mentioned rarely. About 45% of the respondents believed that the festival would be moved to another city as a result of a conflict (the survey was conducted at the time when the decision had not been taken yet). In the opinion of 64% of the respondents, the fact that Łódź could lose the Festival would badly affect Łódź and reduce its chances of becoming the European Capital of Culture.

With time it turned out that the respondents' predictions were correct. Camerimage was moved to Bydgoszcz (2010) and Łódź did not pass to the next stage of the competition.

CONCLUSIONS

The film festivals described in this article are tourist products, which are important for cultural urban tourism. They are essential for developing the tourist function of Łódź, based on cultural development. In this sense they are also an element of change in Łódź as a post-industrial city during the transformation period, after 1989 (Fig.1). From the early 19th century until 1989 Łódź was based on textile industry, sending its products to the eastern market. The changes taking place in the city as a result of the political and economic transformation led to the decline of this industry. This in turn led to the dissolution of large state enterprises

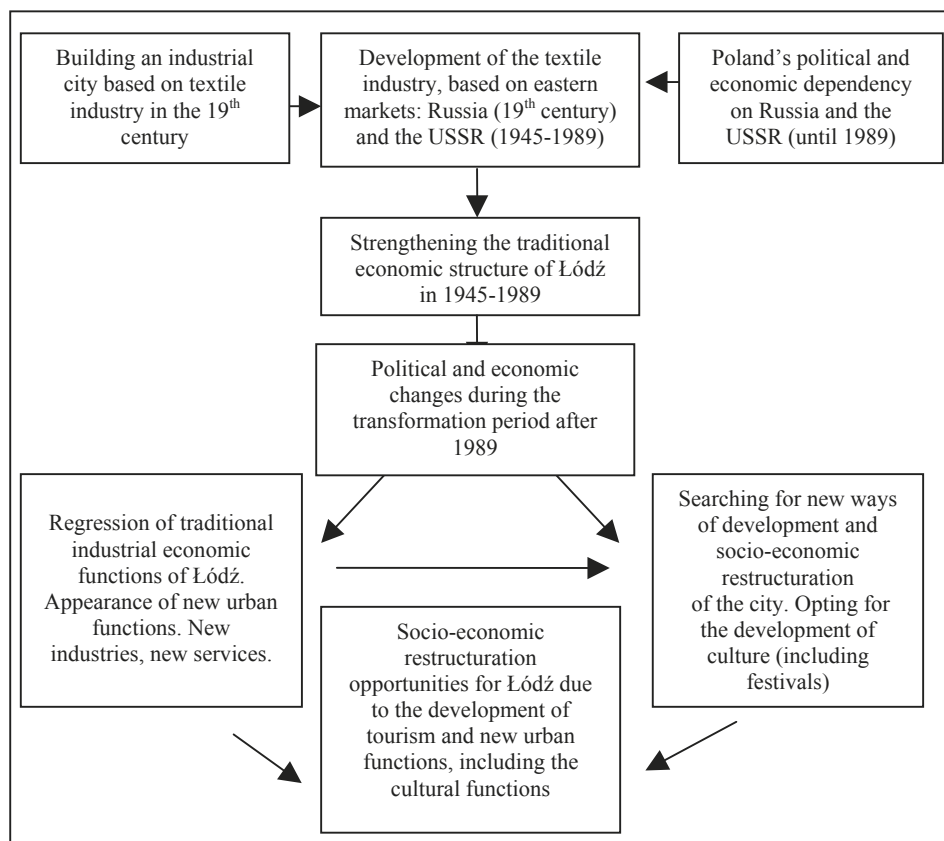


Fig. 1. Model of the socio-economic changes in the city as a result of the transformation

Source: Author's compilation

and common unemployment. Services were chosen as a new way to develop the city. Among the most important ones were tourist services, based on culture. At present, several dozen cultural events are held in the city every year, including the film festivals described in the article. It must be stressed that the role of culture and other services (science, higher education, commerce) may soon turn out to be crucial for the transformations taking place in Łódź.

The author divides the events (festivals) described in the article according to their rank and scale (Table 1) into the following categories: mega-events (high rank, large scale, present in the world media, have influence on the country's economy), distinctive events (high rank, small scale, commonly recognized and identified with the spirit of the city or region), large-scale (large scale, low rank, fairly popular, well-known, with a large audience), and local (low rank, small

Table 1. Types of Łódź film festivals according to rank, scale and regularity

Festival	Type of event-festival according to rank and scale	Type of event – festival according to regularity
Off jak gorąco	distinctive	regular
Festiwal Twórców Powiększenie (The ‘Large Format’ Film Makers Festival)	distinctive	regular
The ReAnimation Festival	distinctive	regular
Festiwal Kina Letniego Filmobranie (The ‘Film-picking’ Summer Cinema Festival)	local	irregular
The Cinergia Festival – the European Cinema Forum	large-scale	regular
Ogólnopolski Festiwal Filmów o Rodzinie FOR (Polish Festival of Films about the Family)	distinctive	regular
Festiwal Kino Tańca (Dance Cinema Festival)	local	regular
The ArtMediaTravel Festival	local	regular
Włodzimierz Puchalski Nature Film Festival	distinctive	regular
Festiwal Mediów Człowiek w Zagrożeniu (The ‘Man Under Threat’ Media Festival)	distinctive	regular
Mediaschool Międzynarodowy Festiwal Szkół Filmowych i Telewizyjnych (Mediaschool – the International Festival of Film and Television Schools)	distinctive	regular
Plus Camerimage – the International Film Festival (editions 2000–2009)	distinctive	regular

Source: Author’s compilation based on field study

scale, organized locally, at a small cost). Moreover, the festivals were divided into regular, irregular and one-time events (Kaczmarek et al., 2010: 107–110).

The majority of film events in Łódź are distinctive products, well recognized in the film circles and associated with Łódź, well established and held regularly. They are a part of the film heritage of the city. However, these events are rather exclusive and do not attract popular audience. There are also a few local festivals, which attract mainly the inhabitants of the city and region, and are commented on in the local media. A larger event is the Cinergia Festival, whose latest edition in 2010 was to fill in the empty space left by the Camerimage Festival and therefore was organized on a larger scale (with a considerable contribution from the city and region authorities).

Festivals have become a tourist asset of the city, a product – an offer for tourists, based on the film traditions and institutions in Łódź. A serious problem of cultural tourism in the city is the loss of the Camerimage Festival, which was certainly the most famous film event. It was a catalyst for the development of film-related cultural tourism. The loss of Camerimage and the resulting problems became one of the reasons why Łódź was rejected in its efforts to win the title of the European Capital of Culture 2016. On the other hand, we should stress the negative overtones of this situation, which badly affected the perception of the city in Poland and abroad. At present, especially after losing such a ‘star’ event as Camerimage, we should focus on creating a similarly strong and recognizable film festival. It can be any of the events described above, replacing the Camerimage Festival and accelerating the development of the cultural function of Łódź.

NOTES

- (1) A festival is a series of art events, usually of the same type (e.g., film, music, theatre), which is a review of the achievements in a given area, organized at a particular time under a common name, often in the form of a competition (Jędrysiak, 2008: 71)
- (2) The graduates of the PWSFTviT in Łódź include film directors, such as Stanisław Bareja, Feliks Falk, Andrzej Kondratiuk, Krzysztof Kieślowski, Juliusz Machulski, Janusz Morgenstern, Władysław Pasikowski, Roman Polański (five Oscar nominations, the Oscar for the Best Director in 2002 for ‘The Pianist’), Jerzy Skolimowski, Piotr Szulkin, Andrzej Wajda (the winner of the Oscar Lifetime Achievement Award in 2000), Krzysztof Zanussi, or Xawery Żuławski. The actors who graduated from the School include Janusz Gajos, Jan Machulski, Cezary Pazura, Pola Raksa, Elżbieta Starostecka, Paweł Wilczak, and Zbigniew Zamachowski. The cinematographers who graduated from the School are, among others, Andrzej Bartkowiak (he worked at ‘Speed’, ‘Dante’s Peak’, ‘The Devil’s Advocate’, ‘Lethal Weapon 4’), Sławomir Idziak (nominated for the Oscar in 2002 for ‘Black Hawk Down’), Jan Jakub Kolski, Zbigniew Rybczyński, Piotr Sobociński, Witold Sobociński, and Jerzy Wójcik (compilation based on the PWSFTviT materials and www.imdb.com)
- (3) The author uses materials obtained in 2010 in a survey conducted at the offices of the organizers of individual festivals; additionally, he made use of the interviews with the organizers. Another source of information were the websites regarding individual festivals. The author analyzed 12 film festivals organized in Łódź, whose main aim is to present different aspects of film making.

- (4) A similar event is the Explorers Festival, but it is larger, more prestigious and its main aim is not to present films but people – himalaists and travellers. That is why it was not discussed in this article.
- (5) Włodzimierz Puchalski (1909–1979) was one of the most renowned Polish photographers and makers of nature films. Trained to be an agronomy engineer, he worked at the Technical University of Lvov before World War II. After the war he started his spectacular career of a naturalist, photographer and film-maker. He made 58 films and won 17 awards at Polish and international festivals. He took part in many expeditions, e.g., to Spitsbergen and Antarctica.
- (6) The Museum of Cinematography in Łódź was open in 1976 as the Department of Film and Theatre Culture at the Museum of the History of Łódź. Since 1986 it has been an independent institution, presenting collections related to the past and present of film. It is situated at the former Scheibler's palace at 1 Zwycięstwa Square, not far from the PWSFTviT.
- (7) The PWSFTviT organizes the 'Łodź po Wiśle' Festival – a Review of Students' Films from the Łódź Film School. It is an extremely interesting festival, because it is organized in Warsaw by the film school from Łódź. It presents the most interesting film etudes, which were prepared the previous year at the Directing and Cinematography Departments, as well as the Animation and Special Effects Studio at the PWSFTivT in Łódź. The festival is combined with a competition for the best film etude. It is described in the footnote as a festival organized outside Łódź.
- (8) During individual editions the Camerimage Festival was visited by many famous cameramen, actors and film directors.

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