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MURALS AS A TOURIST ATTRACTION IN A POST-INDUSTRIAL CITY: A CASE STUDY OF ŁÓDŹ (POLAND)

Abstract: The article presents the development of Łódź murals in the 21st c. and the opinions of the participants of tours organized in 2014 by the Urban Forms Gallery. Their objectives include saturating the urban fabric with street art and promoting this form of artistic expression. Having analysed memories registered and shared on YouTube, information published by local, national and foreign media, opinions posted by tourists and street-art lovers in online blogs and galleries, as well as the information about some artists on their websites, the author studied the opinions of tour participants as well and established the significance of Łódź murals. The analysis enabled her to look for the answer to the question whether murals can be a tourist attraction in a post-industrial city like Łódź.

Keywords: murals, 'netnography', post-industrial city, Urban Forms Gallery, Łódź, Poland.

1. INTRODUCTION

The authorities of post-industrial urban centres search for products which might encourage tourists to visit their cities and in this way indirectly contribute to their economic development. Their post-industrial and housing architecture is sometimes in a poor or very poor condition. Historical monuments representing the post-industrial heritage are not impressive enough to attract tourists, and there are no other attractions. That is why the authorities look for alternative ideas to change the city's image. One of them may be street art, especially large-format murals placed on walls, which, apart from being aesthetic assets, may contribute to its economic development (KOSTER & RANDALL 2005).

Artistic spaces, especially street art, may play different roles in public space (GRODACH 2009). Street art, which was initially illegal and seen as vandalism, has turned into a legitimate form of presenting artistic contents, and has tourism potential. This was what happened in Philadelphia where the authorities first removed illegal graffiti, next launched a wall painting program (DICKINSON 2012), and finally promoted the city as a city of murals. Similar steps were taken by the authorities in Melbourne (YOUNG 2010). In Roxbury and Dorchester (districts of Boston), the authorities promote painting murals for local communities (SIEBER

et al. 2012). Murals have become local economic development factors all over the world, both in small towns and large cities. In Warden (Toronto), Churchbridge, Duck Lake and Moose Jaw, Humbolt also in Canada, they initially served the purpose of embellishing those places, and later became tourist attractions (KOSTER & RANDALL 2005, KOSTER 2008, WIGHT 2006). In large cities, such as Philadelphia, Chicago and Lyon, the situation was the same. Murals often convey a political message (ARREOLA 1984): in Bethlehem, a graffiti was placed on a wall dividing this Palestinian city from Jerusalem to remind people about the ongoing conflict in this region (LARKIN 2014), while the paintings in Salazar's Portugal served the purposes of the Fascist state propaganda (SAPEGA 2002), and those in Iran, the propaganda of the Islamic Revolution (GRUBER 2008).

Murals have become the visiting cards of many cities and an important part of their tourist offer. In the 1980s, they were offered to the local Philadelphia community (ARREOLA 1984). Currently, the 'Philadelphia Mural Arts Program' project, boasts over 3600 works. Set in the urban space they make one of the largest galleries of this kind; Philadelphia has become recognizable as a 'City of Murals'. Tourist offices offer

a wide range of tours and the participants may choose their means of transport: buses ('TrolleyTours'), bikes ('Bike Tours'), on foot ('Mural Mile Walking Tour'), or by special train ('Love Letter Train Tour'). There are also many themed tours prepared for organized groups (e.g. sport, world religions, famous Philadelphia characters). Tour participants receive certificates of attendance, and they can buy some items, e.g. mural art caps (<https://www.muralarts.org/tourism/>).

In Europe, a rich tourist offer based on murals is available in Lyon, where we can find many in a large-format, e.g. at the housing estate designed by Tony Garnier. They can be admired during walking tours organized by the *Office du Tourisme et des Congrès du Grand Lyon*. Apart from taking part in tours, the tourist may use an iPhone application and choose murals on a map, in various districts of Lyon, around the city, generally in France or in other parts of the world, take advantage of geolocation, as well as find murals by entering key words or suitable internet addresses (www.en.lyon-france.com/).

In Poland, street art is becoming increasingly visible. It is possible to indicate many cities where murals are a tourist attraction, e.g. in Zaspá – a district of Gdańsk, or Wilda, Jeżyce, Garbary and Śródka districts of Poznań (ŚWIEŚCIAK *et al.* 2015).

Łódź murals have been analysed by J. MOKRAS-GRABOWSKA (2014) and M. ŚWIEŚCIAK *et al.* (2015). The main aim of this article however is to present the development of Łódź murals in the 21st c., at a greater length than was done by those authors, as well as to present their power of attraction as regards tourists from all over the world along with the opinions of people participating in tours organized in 2014 by the Urban Forms Gallery. A separate aim is to look for an answer to the question whether murals can be a tourist attraction for Łódź.

2. THE STUDY AREA

Łódź is the third most populated Polish city, situated about 120 km south-west of Warsaw. Its origins differ from the history of other large, mostly medieval cities in Poland (e.g. Krakow, Poznań or Wrocław). Łódź developed in the 19th c., when the authorities of the Kingdom of Poland decided to locate the textile industry there. From that moment, it was called 'the promised land'. It was masterfully described by the Nobel Prize laureate, Władysław Reymont, in the eponymous novel, later made into a film by Andrzej Wajda¹. At that time, the city was developing rapidly, increasing its population, area and changing its spatial layout (KOTER 1990). In the second half of the 20th c.,

before the system transformation in Poland (1989), the predominant activity had been the textile and clothing industry. For several decades after World War II, the city remained underinvested, and the 19th-c. secession-style buildings in the city centre, mostly settled by manual workers, were not properly maintained. In order to widen some streets (e.g. Zachodnia and Narutowicza), the beautiful facades were demolished, leaving degraded outbuildings. During the socialist period, the authorities invested in housing estates, which were mostly built far from the city centre. This situation lasted until 1989.

After 1990, local authorities started to revitalize individual residential buildings in the city centre, carried out some new, very interesting projects, such as *Manufaktura*, which in 2007 won the prestigious ULI Award for Excellence, granted by the Urban Land Institute. It was a project in which APSYS – a French company – transformed a 19th-c., 27-hectare factory complex, the former property of Izrael Poznanski, into a commercial shopping, entertainment, cultural and hotel centre, which became the visiting card of the city. Another project, continuing since 2008, is the transformation of old power plant buildings (1906) and Łódź Fabryczna Railway Station (90 ha) into a festival-congress centre, including exhibition rooms, a planetarium and a film studio. The authorities are doing their best to change the image of Łódź from that of a poor, dirty, industrial city into one of a creative urban centre, full of ideas, carrying references to the Łódź Film School², and the works by Łódź artists, Katarzyna Kobro and Władysław Strzemiński, who were building the avant-garde face of the city in the 1930s. According to J. MOKRAS-GRABOWSKA (2010), the post-industrial space of the city encompasses modern art, creative industries and 'off'-cultural activity.

Despite the authorities' efforts, it is impossible to deal with all the negligence of the war and the socialist period within such a short time (*ca* 25 years after the system transformation). In the city centre, close to Piotrkowska Street (less than 200 m), there are many dilapidated buildings defacing the city. The further from the main street, the more such buildings you find. They are a surprising, sometimes shocking view for first-time visitors, but they are accepted, for in-stance, by the organizers of *Meeting the Styles* (Graffiti-Hip-Hop-Event), who organized an event in Łódź in 2005 and wrote (<http://www.meetingofstyles.com...>):

This is a wicked city with a very active scene. If you go through it, you find a lot of greyish walls, nice old architecture, in a bad way – very demolished – and a lot, lot of bombings, tags and throw-ups'.

They noticed the potential of the city which could be used for street-art purposes.

3. THE MURALS OF ŁÓDŹ

In Poland, Łódź has become the most recognizable city with regard to the number and quality of murals. The first large-format murals were created there in the 1960s, during the socialist period. At that time, Łódź was a city with predominant textile and clothes industry, and that is why many of the 200 murals from that time depicted factories (e.g. 'Pierwsza' Silk Textile Factory, 'Olimpia' or 'Lido' Knitwear Factory, 'Alba' - People's Army Cotton Textile Factory, or 'Dywilan' Carpet Factory - <http://www.murale.nmc.pl>). The creators were graduates of higher art schools, e.g. the State Higher School of Arts in Łódź. The best-known artists of that period included Andrzej Feliks Szumigaj, the Arabski-Jaeschke-Tranda group, Zdzisław Fryczka, Zbigniew Łopata, Bogumił Łukaszewski and Roman Szybilski. Today, many of these projects have ceased to exist or are in a very poor condition.

The renaissance of murals in Łódź came in the early 21st c. The first idea to paint a large-format mural was conceived in 2000, during the *Colourful Tolerance* campaign, whose aim was to protest against intolerance, xenophobia and vandalism. In 2001, the *Design Futura* group from Poland was given the task to paint a mural. They received 960 m² of wall surface in the city centre, on Piotrkowska Street (Photo 1).



Photo 1. The mural by Design Futura (Poland), called *Łódka* (Boat), 2001 (Photo: D. Chraścik, 2016)

A year later, in 2002, the first International Graffiti Festival, *Meeting of Styles*, was held in Łódź (<http://www.meetingofstyles.com>). The event had been organized for five years in different European cities: Paris, Berlin, Copenhagen and Zagreb. During the festival in 2002, over 2,500 m² of walls of a former factory buildings were covered with paintings. The following year, the president of the city refused to give

his consent for a second festival. In 2004-06, the festival was restored however, and the participants received a 200-metre-long wall at Łódź Kaliska Railway Station, as well as some surfaces in other parts of the city. The walls were covered with paintings by people arriving from different countries, e.g. Germany (Stohead, DaddyCool, Cazo, Dome), Spain (Okuda), Hungary (Breakone, Heat), Belarus (Pour), England (Connor, Xenz), Portugal (Kayo Klit, Kraft, Bugster), Switzerland (Nada One) and France (Marco) - <http://www.meetingofstyles.com>.

After a one-year break, in 2008-2010, Łódź organized the *Outline Colour Festival*, during which American painters from New York, the Tats Cru group, painted the next large-format mural. The process of creating it can be watched on YouTube (<https://www.youtube.com>). Graffiti artists from Poland and abroad (Maclaim from Germany, NDEC from Japan, Cactus & Maria and Macs from Italy, Hemper from the USA, Stan from Russia, Pornostars from Spain) put their ideas into life on walls, e.g. on the premises of a 100-year-old former factory that used to belong to Juliusz Kindermann, situated in Łąkowa Street (during World War II, it was a branch of Telefunken), on garages, as well as on concrete slabs in Baden-Powell Park. An additional attraction was painting on Łódź trams, buses, and railway carriages. The festival organizers provided attractions related to hip-hop music, as well as breakdance, beatboxing and rap.

At the same time, in 2009, the *Urban Forms Foundation* was established in Łódź, and its activity concerns urban culture in a wider sense, e.g. organizing, promoting and supporting artistic, educational and social initiatives. The foundation's aim is to saturate the urban fabric with street art. The gallery which is being built under its auspices is becoming a visiting card and a unique tourist attraction for Łódź. Every year, festivals are organized during which new murals are painted within short periods of time (<http://www.urbanforms.org>). They have become increasingly popular and are also created on the initiative of the inhabitants or other institutions (e.g. *UniQE ART*).

Thanks to murals - particularly the large ones - the urban space of Łódź has gained a new tourism space distinguishing the city from other urban centres. It is a symbol of modernity and trendiness, enriching the material dimension of the city and gentrifying it (MOKRAS-GRABOWSKA 2014). Tours organized by the *Urban Forms Foundation* broaden the spectrum/range of the tourist attractions in the city, as well as provide the participants with a new, original experience of street art. Murals can arouse interest and become an impulse for the growth of tourism.

4. METHODS AND SOURCES

The author made use of the data obtained during field study and an investigation of related internet websites. Some research can be classified as 'netnography', i.e. a form of ethnographic research conducted on the web, with the aim of analyzing social network portals, blogs and websites (KOZINETS 2002, 2012).

The purpose of reviewing internet sources which mention Łódź murals was to find information about their historical background, as well as learn the opinions of internet users, both in Poland and abroad. The search was carried out on blogs, photo galleries, in art journals, magazines and on YouTube, in Polish, English, French, Italian and Spanish. The following tags were entered in search engines: #mural or #murals, #graffiti, #Łódź or #Lodz, #Urban Forms Gallery, #street art.

The purpose of the inventory was to indicate the precise location of murals, as well as gather photographic documentation. In order to find out what the participants of the tours organized in 2014 by the *Urban Forms Gallery* thought about Łódź murals, a questionnaire was distributed evaluating the tours. The research was continued throughout 2014. The questionnaire was usually handed in towards the end of the tour, when the participants had already formed their opinions. They filled out the questionnaires conscientiously, most willingly answered the questions, and only a few refused to take part in the study. Answers were given by 762 respondents (78% of all tour participants). The first part of the questionnaire included filtering questions e.g. "are you an inhabitant other tourist attractions are you planning to visit during your stay in Łódź?" The other part of the questionnaire was answered by all respondents. They



Author: Roa (Belgium)



Author: Gregor (Poland)



Author: Etam Crew (Poland)



Author: Kenor (Spain)

Photo 2. Murals painted in the centre of Łódź on walls of buildings requiring renovation
(Photo: D. Chraścik, 2016)

of Łódź?" Those who were visiting the city were additionally asked about their main purpose, as well as their plans for spending free time in the city: "What were asked, for instance, how they had learnt about the tour, how they rated its organization and were expected to provide an answer to the question: "Do you think that large-format murals may become the visiting card of Łódź?" The questionnaire ended with filling in some personal data.

The interpretation of results was supported with a report on the qualitative study conducted by A. GRALIŃSKA-TOBOREK & W. KAZIMIERSKA-JERZYK (2014), entitled *Experience of Art in Urban Space: Urban Forms Gallery 2011-2013*. The authors surveyed 454 people, passers-by or those met near murals who agreed to have a longer conversation. The main research tools included an interview with questions. The respondents were mostly Łódź inhabitants, but also visitors, working or studying in Łódź.



Author: Morik (Rosja),
Source: <http://www.galeriaurbanforms.org>



Author: Gregor (Polska)
Source: <http://www.galeriaurbanforms.org>



Author: Daleast (Chiny)
Source: www.galeriaurbanforms.org



Author: Inti (Chile)
(Photo: D. Chraścik, 2016)

Photo 3. Murals painted in the centre of Łódź on walls of buildings after renovation

5. RESEARCH RESULTS

In 2015, there were 36 murals in Łódź, initiated by the *Urban Forms Gallery Foundation*, painted by 61 artists. They were located all over the city but mostly in the centre. They were painted on the walls of both 19th and 20th c. buildings (Photo 2, 3, 6, 7) and on the end walls of multi-family blocks of flats (Photo 4), and rarely on service buildings (Photo 5). Many of them were created on the walls of buildings requiring renovation (Photo 2), which means that they will probably disappear from the city space at some point. Some paintings were made on newly re-vitalized buildings, emphasizing their exceptional beauty (Photo 3).

Most were painted, but other techniques were also used, e.g. a woman's face was carved on the wall of a tenement house by Vhils, a Portuguese artist, or the installation by Łukasz Berger that was created

from 1300 huge nails, weighing over half a tonne, inscribed 'Silence' (Photo 6). The third impressive installation presents a bird (a swift) created by a Portuguese artist, Artur Bordalo (known as Bordalo II), from recycling materials and colourful paints (Photo 7). Mural themes vary, and it is difficult to indicate predominant motifs, but several artists referred to the city where they were working. One such work is one of the first murals, entitled 'Łódka' (Boat) (Photo 1), situated on the main street of the city at 152 Piotrkowska St. It was created in 2001. The work covers about 960 m² and at the time was the largest mural in the world. It is an interesting fact that the artist used 2000 spray cans (www.lodz.wyborcza.pl, www.expressilustrowany.pl, www.murale.mnc.pl). The second work was a postcard-like mural, created by



Photo 4. Murals painted outside the centre of Łódź on walls of multi-family buildings – author: PROEMBRION/ CHAZME/CEKAS/TONE/SEPE (Poland)
Source: <http://chazme718.blogspot.com/>



Photo 5. Murals painted in the centre of Łódź on the end wall of a shopping centre
Source: Proembrion (Poland)



Photo 6. A mural / installation created from nails on the wall of a tenement house by Łukasz Berger (Poland)
(Photo: I. Jażdżewska)



Photo 7. A mural / installation on the wall of a tenement house requiring general renovation, made from recycling materials and colourful paints, by Artur Bordalo – Bordalo II (Portugal)
(Photo: I. Jażdżewska)



Photo 8. One of the first large-format murals in Łódź, created by graffiti artists from the New York Tats Cru group
Source: <http://warszawa.naszemiasto.pl>

graffiti artists from a New York group, called Tats Cru, which was painted on a surface of 733 m², during the 10th International Festival of Graffiti Art – *Outline Colour Festival*, held in Łódź in 2010, (Photo 8).



Photo 9. A large-format mural presenting a Łódź-born pianist, Artur Rubinstein by Kobra (Brazil)
(Photo: I. Jażdżewska)

The last large-format mural referring to the history of the city presents the outstanding pianist from Łódź, Artur Rubinstein. The work was painted by a Brazilian artist Kobra (Photo 9).

Łódź murals have been created by artists from 15 countries (Table 1), representing almost all continents. Some murals were created by more than one artist from different countries, e.g. Os Gemeos from Brazil

and Aryz from Spain (Photo 10), while others are by single artists (Photo 11).

Table 1. Places of origin of artists creating murals in Łódź: 2002-16

No.	Country	Artists/ Artistic teams		Names, pseudonyms or aka
		number	%	
1	Australia	2	3.3	Shida, Stormi Milles
2	Belgium	1	1.6	Roa
3	Brazil	3	4.9	Eduardo Kobra, Nunca, Os Gemeos
4	Chile	1	1.6	Inti
5	China	2	3.3	Daleast, Messy Desk
6	France	3	4.9	3ttman, Remed, Zoe&Velvet
7	Spain	6	9.8	Aryz, Borondo, Boa Mistura, Kenor, Manolo Mesa
8	Israel	3	4.9	Dede, Nunca, Untay
9	Germany	2	3.3	Sat One, Brenna Urban
10	Poland	28	45.9	Authors' list below ^a
11	Portugal	2	3.3	Vhils, Bordalo II
12	Puerto Rico	1	1.6	Alexis Diaz
13	Russia	1	1.6	Morik
14	USA	3	4.9	Tats Cru, Gaia,
15	Italy	3	4.9	Opiemme, Cactud & Maria, Agostino Lacurci
Total		61	100.0	

^a Polish authors of murals: Aleksandra Adamczuk, Andrzej PoProstu, Axl Studio, Łukasz Berger, Bezt, Maciej Błażniak, Katarzyna Bogucka, Chazme, Ciach Ciach, Etam Crew, Gregor Gonsior aka Bombalino, Jadwiga Hacht, Konrad Koch, Krik, Lump, Massmix, Meisal/Meisallasiem – Sławomir Krysiak, M-City, Paulina Nawrot, Pener, Maciej Pisiałek, Proembrion, Mikołaj Rejs, Raspazjan, Sainer, Sepe, Karolina Thu-czek, Tone, Zbiok.

Source: author.



Photo 10. A Housing Estate – Os Gemeos (Brazil) and Aryz (Spain)
(Photo: D. Chraścik 2016)



Photo 11. Inti (Chile) – Holy Warrior
(Photo: I. Jażdżewska)

6. ŁÓDŹ MURALS IN THE OPINION OF TOUR PARTICIPANTS³

From January to December 2014, the *Urban Forms Gallery* organized 10 tours available to all interested. Information about the tours usually appeared in Polish, one week before the event on the website and on a special Facebook profile of the *Urban Forms Foundation* (www.facebook.com/urbanforms and www.urbanforms.org). A tour could include about 150 participants (the minimum number was 30) and were led in Polish. In order to take part, the participants had to arrive at the meeting point at a set time. Some tours were paid, but there were some free of charge (Table 2).

Table 2. Tours organized by the *Urban Forms Gallery* in 2014

Date	Number of participants	Number of respondents	Accompanying event	Cost (zł)
12.01.14	81	75	no	18
22.02.14	124	101	Tourism Fairs	18*
30.03.14	122	122	no	18
27.04.14	118	118	no	18
17.05.14	135	135	Museum Night	0
25.05.14	120	120	no	18
26.07.14	108	108	Łódź birthday	0
20.09.14	55	55	Urban Forms Festival	0
27.09.14	53	53	Urban Forms Festival	0
29.11.14	67	67	no	18
x	983	762	x	x

* For people with a ticket to the Fairs the tour was free.
Source: author.

Sightseeing usually took about three hours; the route was not given in advance and was designed by the guide who also set the meeting point for the participants. Tours organized in September used coaches which could accommodate about 55 people; other tours took place on board buses rented from the Łódź City Transport. As a result, one bus could hold a group of over 100 people. The disadvantage of such a tour was the discomfort of the journey due to the small number of seats. However, an advantage of using city transport vehicles was the possibility to legally pause at regular city transport stops. Most of the route was covered by coach/bus, and if the artists' works were situated close to one another, the group travelled that distance on foot and the coach was driven on to a pick-up point.

Respondents included only participants of available tours. Answers were provided by 762 during 10 tours, attended by the total of 983 people, 78% of all tour participants in 2014. It can be assumed that the samples were representative. The questionnaires were distributed during longer passages between subsequent points on the trail.

Among the participants, there were slightly more females (58%) than males (42%). Among those taking part, the most numerous group were aged 21-30 (180 male and 179 female), 47% of all respondents while the second largest were aged 18-20 (66 male and 65 female), 17%. Those aged 30 and below made up 70% of all participants, a majority. Figures which show interest in street art among those over 50 are quite interesting: 90 fell into this range (68 female and 22 male). This may be a proof that street art, although related to hip-hop culture, is also of interest to older age groups.

The majority of participants (68%) claimed that the main source of information was its Facebook page, 23% said they had learnt about it from a third party, and the remaining from press, radio, television and the *Gallery* website. Nearly everyone (97%) was on a tour like this for the first time. To the question: 'How do you rate the tour of the *Urban Forms Gallery* murals?', 54% rated it as 'very good', 21% – as 'good', 4% as 'poor', and 14% had no opinion.

In order to establish the spatial range, they were asked the following question: 'Are you an inhabitant of Łódź?', 63% lived in Łódź and 37% had arrived from elsewhere. Many came from towns in the Łódź conurbation or other places in Łódź *Województwo*, leading to the conclusion that since 90% lived in Łódź *Województwo*, the reach was regional.

Visitors were asked to give an answer to the question: 'How long are you going to stay in Łódź?', and over half (58%) replied just a few hours. The second most numerous group (26%) included those staying for 1-3 days while 14% for up to a week. The smallest

group (2%) were staying for over a week. It is clear that there is a relationship between length of stay and the main reason to visit. Those for whom the tour was the main motivation came only for a few hours (42.4%) or for up to three days (17.1%) (Table 3).

Table 3. The relationship between length of stay and the main reason for the visit among the participants of *Urban Forms Gallery* tours

Length of stay in Łódź	Percentage of answers to the question: 'Was the tour the main reason for coming?' (n = 280)		
	yes	no	it was one of the reasons
Several hours	41.4	7.9	9.3
1-3 days	17.1	5.4	3.2
4-7 days	7.1	3.9	2.9
> 7 days	0.7	0.4	0.7

Source: author.

The open question: 'What other tourist attractions are you planning to visit during your stay in Łódź?' was answered by 374 respondents in 280 filled out questionnaires. 38 people left this question unanswered, but the remaining pointed to a number of attractions. The most frequently mentioned included *Manufaktura* (37%), Piotrkowska Street (30%), Se-Ma-For Museum of Animation (7%) and the Museum of the History of Łódź (6%). These are not related to Łódź murals, but popular attractions in the city.

The answer to the question: 'Do you think that large-format murals may become a visiting card for Łódź?' was interesting. The majority (64%) answered affirmatively, but 36% gave a negative answer and did not see tourism or marketing potential.

The results conducted among tour participants can be compared to the results of the report on the qualitative research by A. GRALIŃSKA-TOBOREK & W. KAZMIERSKA-JERZYK (2014), entitled *Experience of Art in Urban Space: Urban Forms Gallery 2011-2013*. Applying the random sampling method, the authors questioned 454 people who were found near 29 murals. When answering the question: 'Who needs murals?', the respondents usually spoke very generally: everybody (176), young people (128), Łódź inhabitants, the city in the sense of its population (119); followed by tourists (99). The remaining responses were less common: the city as physical space (34), artists (32), those who are interested – depending on sensitivity (25), the elderly (11), and the authorities (10). The authors of the report were also interested in the respondents' opinions about treating murals as art. The research showed that 440 people classified murals as art, and 409 as art with a positive meaning. At the same time, they did not differentiate between high and pop culture and they did not use the term 'popular art' either.

7. ŁÓDŹ MURALS IN VIRTUAL SPACE

Information about Łódź murals can be found on many websites on the internet. It can be divided into:

- accounts, memories, shared on YouTube,
- information in local and national media,
- information in foreign media,
- information and presentation on authors' websites (blogs, galleries),
- information and presentation on websites run by tourists and street-art lovers (blogs, galleries).

In order to establish the spatial range of Łódź murals, an analysis of foreign and Polish media (but not using Polish) was conducted.

Information about murals appeared on the blogs and photo-galleries of mural artists, 50% of whom came from outside Poland. They represented 14 countries from different continents (Table 3). People interested in street art usually find information concerning the location of individual designs, which can be an inspiration to admire them in the environment of Łódź where it is possible to see the surrounding buildings (<https://www.google.com>).

Apart from the authors' photo-galleries, Łódź murals can be found on their blogs and photo-memories from trips. Sometimes, they post just photographs, sometimes also a short comment (<http://blog.globalstreetart.com/>, <https://newzar.wordpress.com/>, <http://www.businessinsider.com/>, <http://www.dirtycarsmillioncows.com/>). The opinions are positive and encourage people to visit Łódź. photo portals, such as Flickr, Pinterest or Instagram are another place where mural lovers share their photos with others.

Since 2011, internet magazines devoted to street and modern art have mentioned Łódź murals several times, e.g. <http://graffuturism.com/>, <http://www.brooklynstreetart.com/>, <https://streetartnews.net/>, <http://urbanshit.de/>, <http://streetartunitedstates.com/>, <http://ilgorgo.com/>, <http://www.juxtapoz.com/>, <http://www.graffitiartmagazine.com/>, <http://www.streetartutopia.com/>, <http://www.cubebreaker.com/>, <https://streetartnews.net/>, <http://www.journal-du-design.fr/>, <http://www.isupportstreetart.com/>, <http://verynearlyalmost.com/>, <https://www.we-heart.com/>, <http://www.fatcap.com/>. In 2014, the magazine <http://mentalfloss.com/> mentioned Łódź among 11 cities which should be put on the map of world street art. Portals presenting attractive places around the world also contain information about Łódź murals, e.g. <http://www.amusingplanet.com/>, <http://twistedstifter.com/>. EarthPorm puts Łódź murals fifth after Mexico, London, Prague and Lisbon, among 20 of the Best Cities to See Street Art.

Article titles not only introduce the readers to the world of Łódź murals, but also give them a broader perception of the city. In 'The Huffington Post', published in 18 countries, Jaime Rojo & Steven Harrington – Co-Founders, BrooklynStreetArt.com, wrote the following about Łódź murals in 2012 (http://www.huffingtonpost.com/jaime-rojo-steven-harrington/large-murals-transform-lodz_b_3428241.html):

'Huge Street Art Murals Transform City Of Lodz In Poland' – The city of Lodz in Poland is promoting the work of street artists from around the world as a way of creating a cultural re-inoivoration of this city whose population is three quarters of a million'.

A year later, in CNN, in the bookmark 'Travel', in an article entitled 'Bigger than Banksy: Polish street art goes large' (<http://edition.cnn.com>), Łódź murals were presented to a wide audience. The article was followed by others published in 'The Huffington Post', e.g. *A Tidal Wave of Lodz Reborn: 'Lodz Murals Distinguish a Polish City'* (http://www.huffingtonpost.com/jaime-rojo-steven-harrington/a-tidal-wave-of-lodz-rebo_b_8389740.html). They quote the opinion expressed by Michał Bieżyński:

'The founder of Urban Forms Gallery says that his vision is to create the same sort of iconic image of Lodz with murals as Paris with the Eiffel Tower'. 'I would like that people on the global scale would think of Lodz as a city with exceptional public art,' he says grandly while acknowledging that public art shines in many other cities as well. 'When you are thinking about public art, one of the first places that you will see in your mind's eye is Lodz. Of course, comparing the mural project to the one of the most important 'pearls' of modern architecture is pure overstatement, but I would like to create this type of mechanism, this type of association.'

On <http://www.boredpanda.com/>, a mural created by Etam Crew came 17th among '30 Amazing Large-Scale Street-Art Murals from Around the World'. In 2014, the mural by an artist Daleast went on the list of the 60 Best Street-Art Works of 2014, announced by <http://www.artfido.com>.

In 2015, in the Korean, French, Maghreb, Spanish and American editions of 'The Huffington Post', Katherine Brooks indicates Łódź as one of 'The 17 Lesser-Known Cities You Should Visit To See Street Art' (http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/lesser-known-street-art-cities_us_5667328de4b079b281907174). The British 'The Daily Telegraph' encouraged the readers to visit the city in 2016. Jonathan Thompson wrote:

'Łódź: the fairy tale city you can't pronounce' (<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/>) when it comes to fairy tale destinations, the Polish city of Łódź wouldn't trouble many – if any – bucket lists. Nicknamed the 'Manchester of Poland', it was a smoking industrial behemoth during the 19th C., before collapsing into catastrophic decline after the Great Depression. But fairy tales are writ large here today – or rather, painted large. Across the city

– Poland's third largest after Warsaw and Kraków – colossal, colourful murals are appearing on the walls of derelict apartment blocks, ware-houses and factories in ever-growing numbers. And many of these arresting pieces of art are enormous, ebullient interpretations of traditional Polish tales. One of the most impressive, 'The Old Lady with the Chicken', towers over a major junction, depicting a famous children's poem where an amiable grandma and her gold-feathered hen fly to the moon'.

A few days later, the city was promoted on the Westminster Archdiocese website (<http://dowym.com/>):

'Street artists from all over the world have left their marks and murals on the walls of Łódź. Just walking around the city you're sure to see a good number of them, and if you want to catch'em all just download the map'.

Single articles can be found on Turkish <http://allmagnews.com/lodz-murals/>, Mexican <http://graffitiworld.tv/>, Italian <http://arte.sky.it/> i <http://www.art-vibes.com/> and Danish <http://forfhdm.polennu.dk/> websites.

It is difficult to evaluate the spatial range of influence of the internet presented above. It can only be said that most information and photographs of Łódź murals could be found on American media, followed by British, French, German and Italian. The main language used to present them was English, with German, Italian, French and Spanish in a minority. Internet websites were searched using the Latin alphabet, thus it cannot be concluded whether the tags #lodz. and #lodz.mural appeared in other alphabets (Cyrillic script, Chinese, Arabic, etc.).

8. CONCLUSIONS

Łódź mural history is not as rich as that of American cities, e.g. Philadelphia, where they became a tourist attraction and a part of its tourist offer in the 1980s. Their appearance and development in Łódź in the early 21st c., several decades later than in American cities, has similar roots in hip-hop and street art. It became possible only after the system transformation, because during the socialist period, large-format murals were commissioned by the authorities or state enterprises.

Łódź murals are recognizable among a growing group of street-art lovers in Poland and around the world. This is demonstrated by mentions in the social media, such as blogs written by travellers and artists, Facebook, Instagram, Pinterest, Flickr, YouTube, etc., as well as mentions in the press all over the world. The origins of the large group of artists creating their work on Łódź walls, representing almost all continents, show the spatial range of the conviction that Łódź is

a 'mural-friendly' city (Table 1). Very few murals refer to the history of Łódź and its famous inhabitants of national and international fame, though they might greatly increase the city's recognizability.

Discovering the opinions of the participants of tours organized in 2014 by the *Urban Forms Gallery* enabled the author to establish their range of influence as well as their potential range. The research results showed that the tours organized by the *Urban Forms Foundation* and led in Polish were chosen mostly by the inhabitants of Łódź and neighbouring places. This means that they do not have a national, not to mention an international range. The city has not yet prepared an appropriate offer for foreign tourists in languages other than Polish. Let us hope that this is going to change because there are large groups of street-art lovers all over the world, proved by journey accounts posted on tourist blogs. Then the influence of Łódź murals, whose number is growing from year to year, on potential tourists should increase, though it is difficult to predict to what extent.

We should agree with C. GRODACH (2009) that artistic spaces, street art in particular, may play different roles in public space. One can be attracting tourists whose expenditure may generate income for the city. This author's research shows that this potential is wasted, because art sites are not situated close to shops. In Łódź, this aspect has not been investigated and it should be included in further studies, following the example of R. KOSTER & J. RANDALL (2005).

ENDNOTES

¹ The film was nominated for an Oscar in 1974 and the director was awarded an honorary Oscar in 2000.

² A school whose alumni have included Roman Polański, Jerzy Skolimowski, Zbigniew Rybczyński, Krzysztof Zanussi, Krzysztof Kiesłowski and the cinematographer, Witold Sobociński.

³ Chapter 6 was based on D. CHRAŚCIK (2016).

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