

Make the stereotypes invalid.

**Marek Kościółek from the Krzyk theatre
interviewed by Magdalena Hasiuk**

- After the second day of the workshops, what can you say about the group that participated in them?

- On the first day, the participants' age was very diverse. It ranged from five to I don't remember how many. Theatrical experiences and experiences in general were also very diverse. There were people in the group who have been visiting Węgajty for years and some who are here for the first time. Some of them had their notions on the workshops, which sometimes collided with reality. Others were deprived of them because they didn't know me nor other participants. My objective was to make us feel good about each other and influence the group through physical activities and games. When creating micro-actions, it was important to look after the partners, including children, whose presence brought new qualities to the workshops. I have the impression that it has succeeded as much as possible in the framework

of an open meeting (we did not close the door and one could join during the work).

- What was the most important thing in this job?

- Paradoxically, we did not gain any theatrical skills, although we worked on the scenes. One of the participants after the first day said that she was hoping to gain theatrical skills that she could use during work with her own group. At that time, another participant pointed to many such elements that are hard to see at first glance. In our work, it was not about creating a closed group and a common process, but about being vigilant. We learned vigilance for another human being. That was the most important thing for me.

- What does it mean to be vigilant?

- The Węgajty theatre had created the „Vigilance” performance, in which these questions were answered. When I think about being vigilant, I think, first of all, not about happenings, but about other people, about finding oneself also through contacts with other people. I am thinking of mindfulness for other people around me who require and need my presence. This vigilance is a shift from the microscopic dimension in the theatre - from paying attention to a partner and ourselves - to vigilance on the macro scale. In my opinion, from the micro dimension come the most beautiful things that accumulate something that is the nucleus of our actions, being in the theatre, in art, in a gathering or in a meeting. The Theatrical Village is made by people who come here, who are and talk with each other, want something from themselves. These people belong to different generations. There is also some kind of vigilance in this. It is also important to set free the special energy coming from the meeting. The second day of the workshop, when we had a group from the prison in Sztum, was characterised by a completely different energy. It was delivered by the actors of the Piktogram theatre, and alongside their special energy, they also brought in their own experiences and sensibility, which they have both as prisoners and people who create the theatre in prison. Going beyond the walls, they offer us special quality. During the workshops, they teach us something completely different. We wondered where such childishness, spontaneity and creativity in them come from? Does it result from concentration, from separation from the world [which we know], from the fact that they have more time to be with each other and can share this with us? That was how the other workshops participants received them. The presence of the team from the prison strengthened the intensity of our meeting and was also about being very vigilant. The actors from Sztum brought in something very positive - pure theatrical madness, non-mockery,

freshness. They lacked the conviction that: „Here I am, a great artist.” „I just go in and act” - that was their principle. They shared this with us during the etudes, activities and games. The other participants could learn from them, be inspired.

- What was your role?

- I only manage the whole thing. I am alert to what is happening in the group: situations, nuances, conversations, words. Today I also asked the participants to talk to people they know the least. During Village, I can pass a man, talk to him even, and really know nothing about him, and the workshops create such a space for getting to know each other better. Thanks to the workshops, we can learn important things through a joint action, etude or simple conversation, by looking for common points between us. And when they appear, the question arises, what can we do with them? I am thinking about openness, vigilance, about being on the road, but also about stopping over a problem, over a topic, over myself. I am thinking about a journey that does not end with finding something, about searching together and working in a group, about a common pursuit of purpose, in which the effect is not the most important, though good when it is also present.

- Where do you see common aspects for such a diverse group of workshop participants?

- These common aspects would appear through a joint action. Children get on great here - what Ewa also said - today they are together, although in 20 years they may fight with each other... Common aspects mean coming across each other, exchange. It was an interesting confrontation, coexistence of, among others: children, Yacouba Coulibaly from the Côte d'Ivoire and people who broke the law. We got connected by the rejection of stereotypes. I do not know if after leaving the room, after leaving Węgajty they will not return, but here and now they have been left. That is why joint actions of this type remind us of oases, such meetings in which one can make the stereotypes invalid, get some different energy, some „life-giving water”.

- Workshop as an oasis? The Theatrical Village as an oasis? The Węgajty theatre as an oasis?

- You can put this word at any of these areas. When I think about Węgajty, about this place, about the Theatrical Village, I ask myself what connects me with them? It is a certain sensitivity, a way of dealing with another human being who enriches me; but also belonging to a formation in which I feel good, and at the same time I have the possibility of disagreeing with certain things. Wacław Soba-

szek spoke about it, recalling the words of Heraclitus placed above the entrance to the 13 rzędów theatre of in Opole. To discover together what is beyond our upbringing, experience, age, and what is important to us and what we need at this moment. The rejection of stereotypes during the workshops, the belief that no one judges me, and I can freely immerse in it led to the release of various thoughts, emotions, being fearless, to interaction with other people, in which we could touch each other literally and figuratively and experience outbursts.