

Piotr Mikołajczak Ph. D

Summary
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of professional
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accomplishments
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Academy of Fine Arts in Gdańsk

Summary of professional achievements*

Design of the exposition, elements of the furniture and graphic elements of the exhibition *Matki i Statki, czyli duch w maszynie (Mothers and Ships, the spirit in the machinery)*

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Held diplomas, academic degrees

Master of Arts

Academy of Fine Arts in Gdansk

Architecture and Industrial Design Faculty, 2001

Ph.D. of design arts

Academy of Fine Arts in Gdansk

Architecture and Industrial Design Faculty, 2010

Ph.D. Thesis:

Means of water communication in Gdansk.

Influence of the city's architecture on product architecture

- on the example of vessels concepts

Employment Information

Academy of Fine Arts in Gdansk

Architecture and Industrial Design Faculty

Essentials and Methodology of Design Studio

2001–2013 – assistant

Since 2013 – lecturer

*according to Polish law regulations/zgodnie z artykułem 16 ustawy z dnia 14 marca 2003 roku

O stopniach naukowych i tytule naukowym oraz o stopniach i tytule w zakresie sztuki

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1. Didactics, science and popularizing activity

Intro In 2001, after graduation from Architecture and Design Faculty at the Academy of Fine Arts in Gdansk (ASP w Gdańsku), I was hired there as an assistant in the Design Essentials Studio. The studio at that time was undergoing a huge shift, because its founder and head for many years, professor Adam Haupt had retired. The head of the studio position was assumed by the then Ph.D. Waclaw Długosz and I've become his assistant. Period of 15 years of work in the studio, which is now called The Studio of Essentials and Methodology of Design, was very valuable experience, which had shaped me as an educator. Situation of creating a studio from scratch, studio on which professor Haupt's strong personality had left a big stigma, was not easy. Firstly, certain tradition of the studio or even academy held true - secondly there was the will to experiment, which did not comported with that tradition and lastly, my faint at the beginning didactic and design experience, was just starting to take shape.

Waclaw Długosz proved himself to be as strong personality and worthy of replacing professor Haupt. However he did not repeat the professor's authoritarianism, on the contrary, he was willing to seek the opinion and to discuss. It was important to me, that from the beginning of our cooperation it was not a schematic relation of "assistant and professor", bringing the role of an assistant to fulfilling auxiliary tasks of minor importance. Waclaw Długosz, from the very beginning involved me in conceiving of the studio's program and comprehensive thinking about the didactics.

As a student and graduate of Krakow's studio led by professor Andrzej Pawłowski, he has natural predispositions towards it.

Hours long discussions about methods of working with students, conversations about education strategies, creation of design exercises realising those strategies, discussion of the students work results. Those long talks, sometimes in the spirit of argument and polemics were letting me to take up my own stance and shaping of my own views of didactics, becoming precious food for thought. This is why I treat the studio's programme developed over the years as joint work and identify with it.

Therefore, to me, what are the essentials of the design?

I'll start with what they are not. "Essentials" in my opinion should not be "little design"; similar to that from the studio's in the higher years of studies, just dealing with smaller problems or less complicated objects. Essentials are the first contact of industrial design students with rich issues of this field; it is familiarizing them with ranges that industrial design deals with, watching the designers trade from many perspectives and points of view. Just the name "essentials" is obliging. It is the beginning, preparing the groundwork, laying foundations. It is learning the designer's "tongue" - from the proper use and understanding of the design

language, through knowledge of the elements of the design process, to the critical view of the contemporary design and defining one's own assessment. This shaping of a designer's personality, discovering of creative methods of activity, building of the creative self-consciousness, provoking the critical view of reality, and finally – search of individual, original paths of thoughts.

Essentials are transmitting a wide array of inspirations and observation methods. Methods used in the Studio that I'm co-leading are analysis focused on many fields, starting from nature, through engineering, technology, to culture and its fields such as literature or cinema. Careful observation and ability to draw and note conclusions arms the student with skills helpful with solving of later, even very complex design problems.

Essentials are also exercising of elementary designer workshop skills, such as collecting and conscious processing of data, skilful description of own designs, through verbal and artistic means. The latter include: drawing, composition, modelling in reality or virtual, photography. It works as development of individual persons predispositions, discovering of diversity and own areas of activity in the field of industrial design.

These assumptions cannot be achieved only through design exercises focused solely on “small product” or through theoretic following the course of the design process. Sometimes work with the essentials starts with crushing of thinking schemes rose from previous years of education, stereotypes and superficial evaluation.

This work gives a lot of didactic satisfaction, because the time of studying at the essentials is also the time of the most visible changes and development of design skills of the students.

I had described a more detailed program of the Essentials and Methodology of Design Studio in monograph “Work with the Essentials” (Praca u Podstaw. Metodyka nauczania wstępnego w zakresie projektowania wzornictwa w akademiach sztuk pięknych w Polsce, ISBN 978 83 62759 29 3, wyd. ASP, Gdańsk 2012 – enclosed). This book contains separate chapters, devoted to individual essentials studios at Academies of Fine Arts in Poland. There, studio's leaders present authors didactic methods, their output in the form of student's realizations and personal notes and observations regarding the essentials. I was the initiator and editor of this book, which was created through my need for dialogue and comparison of different methods related to preliminary education of designers.

From the same need I had organised national conference devoted to the methodology of teaching in the area of academic essentials in Poland (I Ogólnopolska Konferencja poświęcona metodyce nauczania wstępnego w zakresie projektowania wzornictwa na wydziałach projektowych ASP w Polsce – Praca u Podstaw, Gdynia 2012).

Young man and the sea

The book and the conference were natural succession of the discussion and presentations that were taking place since 2004 during Nationwide Design Seaside Meetings “Young man and the sea” (Ogólnopolskie Nadmorskie Spotkania Wzornictwa „Młody człowiek i morze”) in Krynica Morska.

With the help from my colleagues from the Faculty (Wacław Długosz, Maciej Dojlitko, Paweł Gełesz) I managed to create an event, which entered the didactic landscape in Polish academies for good. For 13 years it was attended by several hundreds of students and dozens of educators from all design faculties of the Academies of Fine Arts in Poland. These were not only design workshops for students of the 1st year of industrial design, but a national forum of educators dealing with essentials. Every year presentations and discussions of education methods take place there, and the tightening acquaintance of the scientific and didactic circle had positive effect on the flow of information between individual academies.

I perceive the “Young man and the sea” meetings as important part of my didactic achievements – not only because I was the author or co-author of the design subjects. It is worth noting that they had initiated a number of changes in the field of education that essentials are and which lies in my direct interest.

I feel personally connected with Nationwide Seaside Design Meetings, because through the years I was its head coordinator and organizer, and my experiences connected with creation of the Meetings, their assumptions, organization and results of the work, I had described in a monograph *Polish Nationwide Seaside Design Meetings „Young man and the sea” Role of experiment in basic teaching of industrial designers (Ogólnopolskie Nadmorskie Spotkania Wzornictwa „Młody człowiek i morze”. O roli eksperymentu w początkowym etapie kształcenia projektantów wzornictwa.)* ISBN 978 83 62759 71 2, wyd. ASP Gdańsk, 2014

Faculty management

Apart from my participation in creating the Essentials and Methodology of Design Studio at the Faculty of Architecture and Industrial Design at the Academy of Fine Arts in Gdańsk, an important task was the position of Deputy Dean, which I had held during 2012–2016 at this faculty. It was a very valuable experience, thanks to which I was able to contribute in the development of the Faculty and learn the efficient realization of the requirements concerning research unit.

Besides many current tasks, together with the Dean, professor Sławomir Fijałkowski and Deputy Dean dr hab. Tadeusz Pietrzekiewicz, I had dealt with the creation of the studies program and modernization of the Architecture and Industrial Design Faculty.

During the term of office we were able, amongst others, to reform and separate the program of 1st degree studies and to differentiate it from 2nd degree. Many changes to organization were made, such as shortening 1st degree studies to 3 years or system of design workshops during the 4th semester, facilitating choice of diploma studio on 1st degree. New subjects realizing program on 1st and 2nd degree had appeared.

To the successes that I had contributed a lot, I can add reclamation of the scientific “B” category (lost for the 2009–2012 period). I had focused on compilation of a strategy important for the Faculty of the so-called scored realizations and I’ve been explaining to the Faculty’s employees the importance of the weight of each event, e.g. creation of scientific monographs. Finally in 2015 we managed to reclaim the “B” category.

Work in the deans office took 4 out of 6 years after achieving the Ph.D., which is why in that period I had less time for the realization of my own commercial design projects, but in return I managed to realize important to the Architecture and Design Faculty goals. Besides, I took part in several research projects, and I had stimulated others, by mobilizing their creators to realize those.

In my educating activity, interesting and pleasant event was the fact that students who had finished the course in my Studio decided to establish Science Club “Process” (Kolo Naukowe “Proces”) and asked me to act as a didactic curator. During several years of Club’s activity, it was possible to organize many valuable events, such as various design workshops for students (among others with IKEA), patronage of the Faculty’s Open Days or the students’ trip to attend the Dutch Design Week in Eindhoven. I had also led the Designers Movie Club within the “Process”, during which projections of movies chosen by me took place, which were widening young designers horizons and encompassing different areas of culture. Before creation of the “Process” I had also led a club devoted to analogue photography, and equipment dedicated to it, for 2 years.

Science
Club
“Process”

Coleading of the 2 design workshops within the Erasmus program in ESAD (ESAD College of Art and Design) in Poro, Portugal was an important and interesting episode in my didactic activity

First workshops (2010) were devoted to the influence the city architecture has on the architecture of vessels used in its area. In large part these were based on assumptions of my Ph.D. thesis, and they related to vessel used on the Duoro River in the vicinity of Porto.

Erasmus
program

The workshops were attended by the students of 2nd and 3rd year of the 1st degree design studies I was coleading them together with M.A. Paweł Gelesz

Second workshops (2015) were titled “Beast on a leash” and they were dedicated to the design of a mechanical toy, based on the basic methods of processing of the rotary motion.

The workshops were attended by students of 1st year of 1st degree design studies. I was coleading them with M.A. Mirosław Rekowski.

These experiences were important in letting me know the state of consciousness, methods and abilities of students from the Europe’s other end and to draw valuable didactic conclusions.

In 2012 I had commenced cooperation with Design Centre of Gdynia (Centrum Designu Gdynia) and I had conceived the concept of Gdynia Design Open Air Event (Gdyński Plener Projektowy)¹. Based on the positive experiences I had from organizing of the Polish Nationwide Seaside Design Meetings „Young man and the sea” I decided to organize design open-air event for graduates of design faculties. The goal I had set was the integration of circles of young polish designers, who graduate and are active professional designers, and at the same time they would like to create a strong designers community in our country.

In the background of the open air event there was the city of Gdynia, which invests in design and with its help, builds own brand. It was possible to organize and conduct three editions of Gdynia Design Open Air Event in 2012-2014. I had been its organiser and curator, together with Paweł Gełesz.

Design wise, each of the editions of the open-air event was devoted to a different design issue. In the First Gdynia Design Open Air Event the designers' task was to adopt old heat exchanger building for a place of meeting of Gdynia's youth. Five design teams were created and five concepts of how in rugged, industrial compartments of old heat exchange building, located at one of Gdynia's housing estate, to create space in which young people can feel at ease and creative.

Second open air event had totally different subjects connected with holidays in Gdynia. The participants' task was to design beach equipment, which facilitates play and leisure at the beach and in shallow water.

Third Open Air Event was devoted to holiday photographs and memories from Gdynia; designers had created a series of city paintings with which tourists could photograph themselves. It was a successful design joke, which fitted in with Gdynia's summer holiday's nature.

Besides design tasks, during the open-air events, additional workshops and designer's training courses were held (e.g. typography photography and 3D software courses).

Overall over 40 designers from all over Poland attended the three Gdynia Design Open Air Events and the assumed goal of integration of designers' community was achieved.

¹ Content and outdoor event's archive is available at:
[http://gdynskiplenerprojektowy.blogspot.com/Enclosed are videos, showing open-air activities in brief.](http://gdynskiplenerprojektowy.blogspot.com/Enclosed%20are%20videos,%20showing%20open-air%20activities%20in%20brief)

2. Works

Product design

After graduating from the Architecture and Industrial design faculty of the Academy of Fine Arts in Gdańsk, besides minor graphic design commissions, that every graduate has to endure, my design path started for good from undertaking collaboration with Satel Company from Gdańsk. The owners of the company, which was designing and producing alarm systems and security appliances, came to the conclusion, that they want to create recognisable and original products – identified with their gaining momentum brand. I replied to the competition advertisement in press (2001) presented them with modest, because student's, portfolio, which however convinced them to undertake cooperation. This lasted for six consecutive years. Cooperation with Satel Company had taught me discipline and humility in fulfilling the exuberant visions of a young designer. I left those in drawings, ideas and notes.

Satel's products were very disciplined and required rational rethinking, not only the construction ones, but also those concerning the form. I was aware that those products will be produced in hundreds of thousands copies, therefore they cannot be too brazen. Their image should communicate utilitarian purpose; functions should be clear, and operation – reliable. They should be moderate, discreet, but retain original, not without the expression, visual nature. For every series of products I had made dozens if not hundreds of sketches, letting me find balanced lines and shapes, adequate to the function and context. The destination of these products are mostly living and office interiors; there they "gaze" discreetly upon their users from the corners of the walls, from the ceilings or are presented on the walls in the vicinity of the doors. Those that are installed on the buildings elevations, not to dominate them, should comply with the general rules and directions of composition established in architecture. At the time I was pondering how to translate such assumptions into the form and what will the technology permit. It was obvious that the devices have to be properly constructed, not to generate any unnecessary cost during the production and assembly process. In this field I cooperated with engineers, technologists and draughtsmen from Satel. In that period I managed to design about a dozen products that were put into mass production – manipulators, detectors of various types, signal devices or remote controls. Some of them are still in production, and one can meet them literally on every corner, walking down the streets of Polish and European cities. I think that they still fulfil the assumptions, that at the time I had tried to translate to form.

They discreetly function in their surroundings and their lines did not succumb to the effect of time and they still fulfil the assumption of staying in the second plan. One of those often-met objects is the signal device from SP 4001 series².

² [Portfolio, page 9](#)

I ended the permanent cooperation with Satel in 2007. The company was already developing very dynamically. In the presence of new design needs, a workplace for designer was created. An industrial designer was hired for it; in subsequent years he had developed new products for the company. Working at the Academy, at the same time needing a detachment from the routine of the past projects and to maintain independence, I walked my own design way.

After 10 years after the cooperation ceased, in 2016, Satel Company turned to me again regarding the development of the new products. I took it as an interesting challenge. I had to create shapes that of new products that will compete with my previous designs; and these had become a certain canon in the field of alarm appliances. During more than 10 years, the technology has changed, modelling methods, and finally Satel is currently a large equipment producer with own modelling studio and factory. I took the cooperation, preparing several new designs of the popular alarm detectors for the interiors. Presently the project is in the research and electronics development phase.

Exhibitions design

After ending permanent cooperation with Satel in 2007, I was seeking new design challenges – different from what I've been doing during the last few years. New possibilities arose soon. I was invited to the design team preparing an exhibition in Muzeum Historyczne Miasta Gdańska (Historical Museum of the city of Gdańsk), concerning utility objects made of silver and connected with Gdańsk and its history. In the design team, together with Paweł Gelesz and Maciej Dojlitko we had created an exhibition that was noticed and awarded second in the national competition: Wydarzenie Muzealne Roku – Sybilla 2007 (Museum Event of the Year – Sybilla 2007)³. Designing of an exhibition had shown me a different side of design, so far not tested in the design practice. I had discovered the power of designing an event.

In opposition to the mass production of series of objects, here we designed an event in specific place and time. Event that arouses emotion, aesthetic and intellectual experience. User was becoming a spectator, who could be entertained with new question or shown an already familiar one in new light.

To me the design of exhibitions is creation of situations, in which people focused on presented subject allow themselves to be broke away from everyday life, learn different way of thinking, activate the imagination, recall images of the past, gain access to a world closed every other day.

Event such as the exposition is also intriguing through its temporariness. It lasts only during given time. Then it stays only in memories, in memory, in photographs or videos, but it does not create objects, that the world filled with, has to overcome. To me the design of exhibitions is a field, in which one can play with design without the weight of material consequences of ones actions. It is a great pleasure and comfort for the designer aware of the overabundance of things.

During the design process, its overall image, spatial scenario, idea of narration of things or stories are important. Means helpful in achieving desired effect are: choice of lighting, colours, graphics, and multimedia.

Besides that conceptual part, a lot of design work goes into creation of details – glass-cases, cabinets, equipment, counter displays, lamps – devices which I describe as “support actors”. In this definition, my interests and experiences from the world of product design and art of exhibition meet..

Apart from projects adding to revolutionary changes in the quality of living, aside from objects of desire, such as cars, furniture or electronic gadgets there is a whole immeasurability of things. If they are well designed, they fulfil the mission of the “work at the core” - shaping of the design culture at an elementary level. Sole fact that designers do “less important things”, can guarantee, that these will at least achieve a level of aesthetic correctness. Designer is aware, that the form is derived from many factors: function, context, technology, but also from the influencing the emotions – applying this knowledge to the “background” objects, creates unobtrusive, matched to the rank of the task that they should serve, realizations. When the image becomes more important than the function, second plan objects become an unauthentic, pretentious oddity. Finding the distance towards the designed thing and the right relation of form and function allow to avoid creating objects that are ridiculous through their maladjustment. This does not mean that they have to be “dispassionate” or “dry”; these should have their own character, to – just as good support actors – be able to be partners for the stars. (2+3D 2006, nr 21, *Bohaterowie drugiego planu, czyli ważne role codziennych rzeczy*)

The
heroes
of the second
plan

Hundreds of thousands of produced pieces of “supporting actors”, or thousands of spectators seeing designed exhibition, oblige the designer to take reasoned decisions; thanks to which he will not be hurting aesthetics of places, to which products designed by him will go. This applies also to exhibition design, which with their arrangement won't be overshadowing exhibited objects, and auxiliary equipment will aid in building comprehensive concept narrating the chosen issue.

Thanks to the fact that just after the graduation I had the possibility of testing my skills in real design connected with production, I don't feel the need to create ornament-designs, “designs for their sole existence”, which are frequently encountered at the exhibitions, fairs or design days – trinkets that unfortunately more and more often are called “design”. Of course I understand this phenomenon and its origins, to which I include the simple fact that young designers desire to somehow come into being on the difficult market and take part in various fair events, where author's designs – made very cost-effectively – have to help them with promoting their own initiatives, enterprises. (I had expanded on this subject in columns published in 2+3D 2012 no.45, *Smakuje jak ulat*; 2+3D 2014, no. 53, *Słowo na „d”*)

If I had to define my attitude towards design, I could sum it up in these words: I'm interested in the life of things amongst people, fastness of both. From the earliest memories things accompany us – we remember their shapes and details. We are surrounded with them, we surround ourselves with them, and they surround us.

Being the designer of objects gives me the opportunity to anonymously join in into these subtle relations. Being the designer I also create events, in which people have to find themselves in the face of objects, sometimes surrender to their influence, and sometimes to give in, to their form.

Publications

My interest in the life of things amongst people, observation of these relations, their interpretation, finds its fulfilment also in other than design, creative activity.

When after finishing the art school, at first try I did not managed to get accepted for Industrial Design Faculty at the Academy of Fine Arts in Gdańsk, I had passed an exam for Polish Philology at the University of Gdańsk and finished 1st year there. The second time I was able to pass the exam for the design studies, so I had suspended my philology studies to start designing, however, the love for writing stayed with me. More or less at the time when I stopped permanent cooperation with Satel, an opportunity has risen, to refresh my "writing" interests and merge them with design. Czesława Frejlich, editor in chief of 2+3D, proposed that I would write several articles for the quarterly. At first these were thematic – about ship, train or other products design; then my cooperation with the design quarterly started changing its character. Thru ought next several years I wrote columns, in which I had shared my fascinations and observations concerning objects and their relations with people – series of articles "Almost like design" (*"Prawie jak dizajn"*). In the next series "Black Pete" (*"Czarny Piotruś"*) I had been describing my observations of engineering, design and phenomena around them. I had also written book reviews and other thematic articles. For example as a practicing – motorcyclist and designer – I wrote an article about motorcycle design and material culture, which grows around them.

Thanks to the cooperation with 2+3D quarterly, I was able to pass, my interest in the life of objects, on to the readers, and at the same time to organize my observations in the form of articles. I mention this, as it was a very important chapter in my "life as a designer", which gave me a lot of creative satisfaction, pleasure from being the designer and at the same time a commentator of our developing environment.⁴

Photography

While writing about my creativity; I cannot leave my friendship with photography unmentioned. It is the field that to me is inseparably connected with looking at the environment with the eyes of a designer. One could surely write another essay about the connections of photography and design; here I would like to only post few personal notes on this fascinating domain.

⁴ I present enclosed scans of my articles, published in 2+3D

My adventure with photography has certain personal connection with industrial design. Family owned camera, polish Alfa-2, designed by Krzysztof Meisner and Olgierd Rutkowski, aroused children's admiration in me. Camera's heavy body, shiny, grooved, metal front, cream coloured knobs and lens casing, has made me interested in photography – as a field bordering magic and reality. I tried to understand how light leaves its footprint on the perforated band. It still fascinates me, and maybe because of this, even though I use modern digital cameras, I am also loyal to analogue pictures, capturing on the film, important to me photographic notes.

Palpable artefact, which the celluloid film is, on which the light leaves its mark, is to me the bridge between modernity and what has been creating it, history of engineering and design. Besides sentimental, photographically simple Alfa, I own about a hundred of analogue cameras, and I still use several dozens of them, having the way they are designed in high regard. I always carry one camera, because I can not resist the obsession of observation of the connections of time, places, people and objects existing in certain configurations very briefly in, as Henri Cartier Bresson used to say, decisive moment.

What interests me the most in photographic notes, are seemingly plain places and events; however I try to extract from them singularity available only to the very astute observer. Sometimes I call them „boring photographs”, peripheries, margins, someone also said about them „exoticism is near”.

Apart from purely enthusiast approach to photography, I also create, designed previously, photographic cycles, published in the form of calendars, realized for big brands.

Thanks to the collaboration with designer, Mirosław Rekowski, winner of many awards in the field of calendar design, we were able to work out with clients a satisfactory artistic quality of calendars illustrated with my photos.

I mention this, because every such cycle is earlier designed with the help of sketches, descriptions; only after that I grab my camera and try to recreate what was found in design assumptions.

Photography is a pleasant steppingstone from industrial design, however whole that time it is connected with careful observation and analysis, close to the designer.⁵

Another creative steppingstone from the design is realization of movies, in which I've become interested during industrial design studies. In professor's Jacek Popek Studio, recording was an important tool during design research, and also for presentation of the projects. I was very fond of this method and I had started to develop my interest in realization of videos. Once (on the 5th year) I have even

Film

⁵ manekino.blogspot.com

pondered starting studies in that field. Partly for fun, partly for challenging myself, I decided to take an exam for direction faculty at Film School in Łódź (Łódzka Szkoła Filmowa). The exam's result was a surprise to me, because without professional preparation from initial list of 180 candidates I managed to reach the chosen 30. Ultimately however, I was not accepted for the studies and have not tried to take the exams again. I had become drawn by my work on industrial design master's thesis, and immediately after – work as an assistant at the academy. Nevertheless I do not part with my camera. Creation of motion pictures, planning, capturing and montage are very close to the process design thinking.

Similarly to photography, I try to capture subtle relations between people, objects, places and time. Apart from capturing of author's video notes, I had realized several clips, presentation and documentary commissioned videos. In attachment on the DVD I present several clips connected to my didactic activity in Essentials Studio; these are the tasks realized by students of the 1st year within the Studio. I also attach chosen videos being the documentary of... the event, which I had been mentioning in the chapter devoted to didactics.

Summary

One of the challenges which I had undertaken in the period after defending Ph.D. thesis (December 2010), was dedication of myself to, what after one of my mentor's and professors, Jacek Popek, can be jokingly called „social-design” („socjo-design”). As I mentioned before, in 2012-2016 I was the Deputy Dean of the Architecture and Industrial Design Faculty. Undertaking of this task forced me to resign from a couple of interesting design commissions. I had given them up, because I sacrificed my time for the work benefiting the faculty. I have such personality trait that I cannot perform undertaken task without full involvement and partially. Now, after this interesting „social-design” exercise, which made me aware of the importance of proper cooperation with large team, I intend to commit more time to my own design activity.

I don't perceive writing nor defending the Ph.D. thesis as a breakthrough in my professional creative path, therefore my design work didn't change significantly after. Ph.D. was rather connected with my position in the academy and facilitated my scientific development.

In the last six years, which was the time after defending the Ph.D. thesis, my design work was the synthesis of my previous experiences. Previous years – until the realisation of thesis – I can clearly divide into „design” and „exhibition” periods; it was the time of searches and experiences.

However in the last six years that division was not that distinct, because it happened that almost at the same time I realized exhibition and product designs. I still feel however that I gain the experience, because every new project is a challenge, during which I learn subtle ways of action. I feel confident using design methods developed so far, but still the needed

amount of distance towards my own creations is greater with every new project. I focus more attention on the analysis of the expectations towards the new project, on common, with customer, building design assumptions for the new design. However at the same time I'm less „democratic“ during the design's development – I try not to present too many of the variants. This results from the responsibility in making decisions during the design process, and it relieves customer from unnecessary dilemmas he may have with the choice of the „right“ version of the design.

I hope, that there are many interesting design challenges in my future, thanks to which I will be able to develop my abilities and to broaden my experience.

3. Description of the work

Design of the exposition, elements of furniture and graphical elements of the exhibition „*Mothers and Ships, a spirit in the machinery*” (*Matki i Statki, czyli duch w maszynie*)

Substantiation of the choice of work – exhibition

Of the projects realized after attaining the Ph.D., I chose the design of a quite special exhibition. It is a realization that was placed in extraordinary interior of a Museum Ship. In that period I had been designing and realizing several exhibitions, this project however, because of its localization, created many design and realization restrictions. Ironically they also have created new possibilities and proved to be an interesting design challenge. Exhibitions designed in typical museums do not lend themselves to interesting concepts very often; their formal infrastructure dictates certain definite order, quite schematic sometimes. As a designer I try to fight the duplication of the schemes and to design every exhibition in a way so that it would be an intense aesthetic experience for visitor. However localization, spatial conditions, available equipment or finally the budget, have large influence on the project. „*Mothers and Ships*” exhibition had a special meaning to me – both because of place where it was held and the way I worked on it.

Club of God Mothers of Owners of the Coast of Gdańsk (Klub Matek Chrzestnych Armatorów Wybrzeża Gdańskiego) has contacted me via Mr Tomasz Gruszkowski, the curator of the exhibition, with the proposition of designing the exposition „*Mothers and Ships, a spirit in the machinery*”. To me as an industrial designer, to whom the ships are close, it was a very intriguing challenge – the creation of an exhibit-story about a special relation of people and the machines. My master's thesis at the Industrial Design Faculty at the Academy of Gdańsk, and later Ph.D. thesis were connected with ships or vessels in a broader sense and the city.

Story about connections of ships' godmothers with their steel children – warm and strong relationship, but also very antiquated in today's speeding world – had me intrigued for good. In the end what helped me make the decision was that the Museum Ship „*Sołdek*”, belonging to National Maritime Museum in Gdansk (Narodowe Muzeum Morskie w Gdańsku), was chosen as the exhibition's scene. Everyone that has visited this city in the recent years surely must have noticed *Sołdek's* tall sides reflecting in Motława, across the famous *Żuraw*.

After experiences with designing exhibitions in museum halls or galleries destined for exposition, I've felt that the exhibition on-board the „*Sołdek*” might be a task where designer will be especially needed. I was not mistaken.

On the one hand the story from the past about women who are mothers for huge machines and men of the sea. On the other – worn-out collier moored in touristic centre of Gdańsk.

At first I thought it was quite theatrical and unauthentic, however when I started to familiarize myself with material, on the base of which the exhibition was to be created, I realized that the things were different. Chronicles and volumes kept by the Godmothers, their correspondence with the ship's crews, their emotions or indignations caused by not being informed about ship's fate – all of this was very genuine and convincing in its honesty. When I personally met a few of the Godmothers, after conversations with them, I had no doubt that it is really happening. They really do care about their steel „children” and their remembrance.

For this the most, quite egoistically I prize the designers trade: during every design task I can get acquainted with another reality, be the guest invited to this world, finally – to become its herald, tell its tale or help it change. Telling the story of Godmothers I treated as a designer's challenge.

While familiarizing myself with the idea of the exhibition, I have also acquainted more in-depth with the place I remembered from the school trips from years ago – „Sołdek's” interior. Almost nothing has changed. In contrast to the motherly relations with ships, I was greeted by austere interior showing difficult life of the Museum Ship. Steel bulkheads covered in grey, lustrous paint, rubberized, dark brown floors; everything lit by cold, shadow less light of fluorescent lamps. In that interior lopsided cabinets with uninteresting exhibits, gloomy ship models remembering distant histories and faded info graphic boards made a depressing effect. All this was complemented by pious esteem from the museum's ship caretakers, which later on took its toll in the form of ban of any changes in the Museum Ship's interior, including prohibition of securing anything through drilling, installation of pegs, bolts or even any violations of the grey painted surfaces.

„Sołdek”
the
museum
ship

On-board the „Sołdek” there was nothing that would aid in building an attractive exhibition or even basic equipment that would help the exposition, like lighting or suspension system. With unlimited budget this wouldn't pose a problem – ships interior could be equipped with necessary objects. However, as it often happens with exhibitions' finances, the resources were very limited.

Another problem was that the spacious ship's interior is accessed via narrow and short door (abt. 60 cm wide and with a height of abt. 190 cm) placed in a sidewall, deep inside equally narrow corridor. This excluded bringing rigid objects of length over 2 meters and width above 1 meter. Glass cabinets, counter displays, rigid boards, scaffoldings or even long ladders are such objects.

My enthusiasm and the vision of attractive, remarkable exhibition faded a bit confronted with empty holds of the Museum Ship, not particularly wealthy patron and strict technical limitations.

However, as professor Adam Haupt, who taught me design essentials, used to say *Designer must be flexible and accommodating type*. Therefore in spite of the difficulties, this task has drawn me. I decided to challenge my flexibility and adaptability.

Talks with the organizers, regarding the scenario, cost estimate continued since the turn of autumn and winter, still final decision about the realization of the exhibition was suspended, because gathering of the funds, talks with the Museum were opened. A proposition to realize the exhibition in a year appeared. Eventually, the decision to make the exhibition was taken suddenly, due to the favourable conditions. This was in April, and the opening was scheduled for mid-June. This was another strong factor testing designers and adaptability.

There was no time to lose it was essential to start from designing the method of proceeding with the project. So far – apart from projects conducted individually, supplemented with the knowledge of engineers and technologists – I worked in design teams, which consisted of two or three designers at most, including myself. This facilitates casual dialogue; verification of the ideas, supplementing of the design predispositions, and at the same time does not create unnecessary chaos and does not cause misunderstandings with the division of labour. With the right amount of time for the project, I regard this model of work as beneficial and proved, with the exhibition on „Sołdek” I had to try out another model of action.

In the opening talks with the curator of the exhibition, Tomasz Gruszkowski and Godmothers, I was accompanied by Paweł Gełesz – designer, whose abilities, energy and skills I hold in high regard. For many years we have collaborated in the design of museum expositions, and many other design tasks; supplementing our ideas, we created harmonious design team.

This time things turned other way. Paweł Gełesz was in the middle of realization of another project, besides that, at the same time we have been realizing the project of different exhibition.

Time and efficiency constraints made me, in the realization of „Mothers and Ships”, take the role of the designer of the exhibition’s concept and exposition elements alone. Had it been an exhibition in a museum, optimised for exposition, it wouldn’t be perhaps anything special. However several hundreds of square meters of area totally unprepared to make an exhibition in the „Sołdek’s” interior is a whole different story. Lack of any exposition system or lighting, with the exception of tragic fluorescent lights, and clear statement from Museum’s representative about no possibility of violating the walls or ceilings surface or any other elements in any way, didn’t make the situation easier. Huge scope of design works was to be grasped, starting from compilation of the cost estimate, design of the spatial scenario, through the designs of objects, graphical elements, to lighting and the system of exposition’s suspension and plenty of other details.

All of this in a very short time (2,5 months) in a large space and with significant realisation restrictions. Sum of this convinced me that this time I have to use different methods of work. In short time I had to create a design-production team, which will be able to realize the exhibition and efficiently fulfil given tasks. Apart from the designer's role I have tested myself as a coordinator managing several members team. It consisted of both experienced designers and industrial design students. With such varied eight-person constitution of the team, working on different levels of cooperation during the exhibition's realization, an important and difficult task was to uphold the overall vision of the exposition, which resulted from my design.

To make this possible, after conceiving the idea of exhibition I attended to the realization of each of its parts and appointing individual tasks to the different persons, for example in the case of graphical media it was their content, amount, format, material, colours, fonts, styling suggestions.

During the realization I had been coordinating and correcting individual elements of the design.

The outcome proved to be very satisfying. It was possible to create a visually consistent but not monotonous, graphic design of the exhibition.

Besides design and production team, two companies were hired to physically build the exposition. Thanks to the professionalism of the companies and their flexibility in the cooperation with the designer, it was possible to realize most of the designed furniture and attain proper effects on time.

Thinking about the aesthetical concept of the exhibition, it felt natural to use the aesthetics of the rugged, technical space of the inside of the ship. This space presents itself to the entering person as one big compartment divided in the middle with a steel bulkhead with quite wide passage. During the active service of the ship, these compartments were two large cargo holds, however to adapt the ship to the museum needs a deck, which divides these two deep cargo hold spaces in to four compartments, was added.

Upper compartments are connected with a passage in the steel bulkhead. One can descend from them via steep stairways to two lower compartments bordering ships bottom. These compartments are separated and are two rooms closed with walls. Artificially created upper „deck” does not adjoin the ship's hull sides; between it and the sides there is a gap of about 2 meters. Thus the spectator standing on the floor of the upper compartment may observe a fragment of the lower deck, but firstly – he can admire historical ship's sides with their frame construction. Rhythmical construction of the ship served me as an inspiration and leading motif in building the rhythm of an exposition. To emphasize the ship's specifics, I decided to extricate rhythmical space. In the spaces between the frames I've used uniform LED lighting. This had produced theatrical but awe-inspiring feeling of staying in the interior of the machine. To underline scenography effect, light softly illuminating

The
concept

spaces between frames had a blue tint. Graphical media copy and interpret rhythms in an unobtrusive way, of which I will mention within the description of the individual parts of the exhibition.

As an important thing I assumed that the spectators entering the Museum Ship have the possibility to know it from the inside, therefore the design of the exhibition should respect that interior. Therefore the exposition's design shouldn't be too expansive, so it would not change the rugged character of the steel interior of the machine.

The idea to use the ship's severity consisted not only of its exposure through emphasis with light. I have decided to highlight it also through contrast. In opposition to steel, technical austerity, dark ship's cargo holds, I have decided to use light, bright, soft, large format fabrics. Aside from achieving contrast to steel interior they also served as an element, which I've used to change communication inside the compartments, thus – to force a new way through the exposition accordingly to its spatial scenario. White fabric walls served also as screens for the film projections, which were screened during the exhibition. As the graphical medium in this part of exhibition I have also chose white canvas. To emphasize its lightness and contrast to stiff steel constructions, it was mounted in such way that it's lower edge was turned towards the ship's sides, giving the impression of lightness and softness, evoking associations with waves and sails. At the same time in certain parts of the exhibition whiteness of the materials gave the interior a „ceremonial” quality of christening or motherly visit, which I will mention on the occasion of the description of individual halls.

In the meantime, the time has come for the first design solutions of the exposition and lighting system, which was to have an effect on the spatial placement of the elements of the exhibition. I have already mentioned that any standard solutions such as rigging systems, suspended gratings or ceiling brackets were not possible. The reason was the lack of approval for mounting of the pegs or drilling in any of the elements belonging to the interior, even those that were not historical and had nothing to do with the ship's construction. After studying of different variants came a solution that seemed simple. Cargo hold doors constituting the ceiling are made of metal; therefore one can use strong neodymium magnets that will support needed installations. At the same time a project of the exhibition was made, taking into account the construction of the struts and suspensions based on the magnets. The idea was good, but during the first trials it occurred that what looks like steel covered in grey paint not everywhere is what it seems to be. It turned out that the cargo hold doors are covered in over a dozen centimetres thick insulating foam. The idea of magnets attached to the steel ceiling could not work out.

A new concept of the arrangement of the elements of the exhibition was therefore needed, based on the steel sides of the ship – this time firstly carefully

checked with the help of the magnet. It has changed the thinking behind lighting, projectors and info graphics mounting. Actually whole concept of the placement of exhibition elements had to be rethink anew and design such suspensions and brackets, which will hold on the magnets attached to the wall.

4. Exhibition's spatial narrative

I have decided to use the division of the ship's space into four compartments (two of which are transitional, however I've had changed the way they are accessed).

I will now describe their meaning and how they had helped telling the story of mothers and ships and how were they placed in the space of the Museum Ship.

Hall no. 1

To introduce the spectator to this, not obvious at all, tale, I decided to firstly familiarize him with how the ships are made, their functions, history, hard work connected with building and trivia about ships. This part of exhibition was tentatively called „shipyard's hell”.

To attain satisfying „hell” effect, I had to change the communication on the ship during the exhibition, in such way to take the spectator first into its „depths” that is to the lowest deck. People entering the exhibition have not seen the vast cargo hold's space anymore, they couldn't reach its level because white fabric wall tightly obscures the view into the ship's interior, which would disperse the aura of mysteriousness and uncover bigger part of the exposition, which would destroy the linear narrative of ships and mothers.

Fabric wall served also as a screen of reversed projection. Spectators, entering the interior of the ship via narrow stairs, have in their close proximity in front of their faces scenes from archive movie from the ship's birth. Movie is projected from the interior of inaccessible hall, which introduces the viewer to the exhibition's mood and forces him to attention.

Farther, the only possible way leads lower via stairs, into the depths of the ship. Here eyes slowly accommodate themselves to limited amount of light and blue under lit sides and sound background, bringing industrial associations with shipyard, transfer the viewer into the stages of vessel's construction. Four large format LED screens project repetitive sequences of ship construction, such as welding or riveting. Screens are suspended in the compartment's interior, along the starboard (on the left looking from the entrance), and do not limit access to it. Flickering light of the screens, showing the welders amongst others, creates the mood of anxiety. In order to maintain balance, right side of the compartment calms with the blue background of rhythmically placed and strongly lit with spotlights, seven graphical boards (author of the graphic design: Maciej Dojlitko).

The
entrence
to the
world
of ships

Boards, on which interesting facts regarding ships were placed, are printed on soft plastic material and suspended from the ceiling so that it creates rhythmical wall. The dominant colour is blue of the background and white or black and white typographical (header font: Lobster, continuous text font: Ubuntu) and graphical elements. These boards lightly introduce the spectator into the subject of ships, giving various trivia and facts, such as e.g. how first boats were constructed, how they changed in history, but also how many T-shirts the biggest container entering polish harbours can transport or the comparison of the chosen ships with large buildings (Pałac Kultury i Nauki in Warsaw or Kościół Mariacki in Gdańsk and others).

At the side of each of the boards a pipe is mounted from the ceiling, which reminds of the ventilation or communication pipes on the ship. This is the element of surprise and one of many details of the interactive exposition. In each of the four exposition halls I made sure that such elements were present; they are not too expansive, but after discovering its function they will pleasantly surprise the visitor involving him with discovering the exposition.

Here, stopping in front of the info graphic boards, viewer triggers a sensor turning on the player and speaker hidden in the pipe, from which one can hear the voice of a lector reading the text visible on the board (Jakub Stojałowski – designer, student of master's studies at the Faculty of Architecture and Industrial Design created interactive elements).

Similarly as in the case of LED screens, viewer can walk between ship's side and exposition boards. Bright lighting of „the other side” of the boards and blue-lit side invites him to it; the arrows on the floor also subtly suggest it. When the spectator decides to enter between ship's side and the boards he discovers that the boards are printed on both sides. In this cameral space, description of „Sołdek's” history, introduction of its constructor and captains silhouettes found its place.

Exhibition „Mothers and Ships” required large space and previous exhibition devoted to „Sołdek”, largely differing from modern exhibiting standards, had to be removed. In return, within the designed exhibition, there was space for telling the story of the ship that this exhibition is about.

Graphical boards (design author: Paweł Świdorski) are aesthetically and factually consistent with the designed exhibition creating visual unity with it.

At the end of the „corridor”, which was created between ship's side and the boards (intentional narrowing of the space bringing associations with narrow ship's corridors), an under lit model of „Sołdek” was suspended. On the opposite side, three paintings with maritime motifs from the collection of National Maritime Museum in Gdańsk were displayed.

Compartment devoted to ships and their construction, besides important elements placed along the ship's sides, has a dominant placed in the middle of the hall.

Between the steel pillars supporting the ceiling, heavy tools used to build the ships, amongst others „Sołdek”, were suspended. Until now they were placed in short, steel and glass cabinets, where they were anonymous, untouchable exhibits. I have decided to take the tools out of the cabinets and let the viewer see them at the eye level or even feel their coldness and weight through the touch. They make quite an impression – they are huge, pneumatic riveting hammers, and their bulk and weight are awe-inspiring.

Important element of the exposition in two lower halls was the use of the floor. On its dark surface, light coloured graphical elements, taken from the aesthetics of technical drawings, were placed: lines, arrows, and fillings, centreline marks. This brings connotations with moving around blueprint – the deck’s layout. Additionally, the places where one can stop at or where one should not trespass were marked in this manner.

A large model – ship’s section, supplemented equipment of the hall designed as an entrance to the world of ships. Important element was the projection of movies presenting different types of ships launchings. Launch, crowning the ship’s construction was the farewell visual element in the hall devoted to the construction of the ships. Projection used the hall’s steel bulkhead, to which the stairs leading upstairs to the next space of the exhibition were attached, as the screen.

Hall no. 2

From the part devoted to the construction of the ships, where limited number of lights had built dark mood, the viewer with stairs leading higher moves into different atmosphere of the exposition – brighter and lighter, ceremonial and grand. Exposition in this part is devoted to the ceremonies of christening, maritime traditions and to bonds between people and ships.

This compartment was created through screening of the cargo hold’s space with large white fabric. Apart from the role of light wall and background brightening the interior, it also serves as a screen on which the archive footage is being projected – its fragments, the visitors had already seen „at the entrance”. Here it can be viewed again, so to say on the other side of the fabric wall – screen.

I wanted to avoid, so that „mothering” to the ships was associated solely with the socialistic past of our homeland. Yes, in Poland it experienced exceptional growth in socialist times, when often the wives of then prominent people and important activists but also artists and women meritorious for sport, science and other domains of life, were becoming Godmothers. However, apart from the silhouettes of actual Godmothers, I wanted to show and to tame the phenomenon of „mothering” itself, its genesis and symbolic. That is why in before the entrance

The hall
of
christenings

to the hall no.3 presenting Godmothers silhouettes, I walk the spectator just through hall no.2 – devoted to the tradition of ships christening and to the figure of Godmother.

Main accent of this part of the exposition are vertical, rhythmic and softly hung along the sides, white fabrics (6 pieces). They are mediums for information about why the ships are named, where the tradition of ships christening originates from, since when ships are being christened by women and what are the superstitions or dangers at the sea or even – one can read on them the text spoken by mothers during the christening ceremony.

These stretched fabrics are continued in the next hall (no.3), which can be accessed through the wide passage in the steel bulkhead. Perspective of the hall no. 3 is visible from the hall no. 2 and expositions in both halls are connected by these suspended high, light fabrics, wrapped softly just above the deck's floor. They give the feeling of lightness, in far association reminding of sails, but also making the austere interior of the Museum Ship warmer and more unreal.

The colour of the boards in hall no.2 – „hall of the christenings” is inverted in relation to the boards from hall no.1, where blue was the background. Here the most important accent is the white. Imprinted on it in two shades of blue is information and illustrations done based on graphical motifs taken from the collections of Rijksmuseum of Amsterdam. The entirety of graphical elements emphasizes ceremonial mood of the hall, supplemented with a bit of eeriness borrowed from the old masters images of the sea adventures.

In the hall devoted to the traditions of ships christening there are a few more, important elements serving the purpose of building festive atmosphere. Of the most important ones are three glass cabinets styled as tables covered with white cloth. To create them I have adapted the existing cabinets, however I redesigned them in such way to give them the shape of symbolic tables. I raised the bottom inside the cabinets so that the exhibits were placed closer to the glass, which covers them, and at the same time – closer to the spectator. In the cabinets I have used LED lighting, hidden under the „tablecloths”, brightly exposing the „tables” contents. To cover the board on which the exhibits are placed I also used white cloth. On it I have designed a graphic pattern inspired by gullible embroidery with the motif of a boat, which I've found in one of the Godmothers chronicles.

In the cabinet-tables there are, amongst others gifts, which were given to Godmothers by the ships crews. These are hatchets, which were used to cut off the moors during launches, or fragments of the bottles which were broken during the christening, encapsulated in various ornate packaging. There are also some more original exhibits, such as a model of the engine piston gifted to the Godmother; there is also a diploma for one of them.

„Tables” also showcase past navigation equipment and objects connected with staying at the sea, such as ornaments made by the sailors themselves. The goal of it all was the familiarization of the sentimental and personal side of long sea excursions and of the symbolic role of mothers-caretakers in those excursions. In separately exhibited vertical glass cabinet, a card made by the sailors for the Godmother on the occasion of Mothers Day (26th of may in Poland) was honoured. Important elements of exposition in this hall are scrolled by hand, vertical boards – „ribbons”. They are sewed in the form of a loop prints, which were suspended on designed for this purpose rolls, so they could be viewed indefinitely by scrolling their contents. I was inspired to this treatment by the chronicles of the Godmothers. Inside of these books all the press cut outs regarding godmothers and their ships, but also the articles regarding the crews, celebrations that were attended by polish ships, or descriptions of the life at the sea and its problems and monotony, were meticulously collected. On the ribbon-carriers one can find a collage of enlarged, scanned press cuttings and photographs. Viewer can stand in front of them and while scrolling them he can learn the esteem that ship „mothering” had in the times of socialism. This part of the exposition is placed in front of the white cloth background „wall”.

In this part of the exposition, besides the interactive element that the ribbon with archive contents was, there was another interactive object. During the first inspection of the „Sołdek”, a vintage radio coming from the ship fell into my eyes. It has a form of an expanded cupboard with width and height of about 2 meters. I have decided to use this object. First thought was to check if it could be turned on. However after initial inspection I already knew that this would not be possible, nevertheless I didn’t abandon the idea. Original radio was supplemented by added desktop, behind which potentiometers and buttons matching the style of the radio were placed. On the desktop, an apparatus for signalling with Morse code was also added. The person responsible for the project of bringing the radio to life, was the student of industrial design of Academy of Fine Arts in Gdańsk, Jakub Stojałowski of whose abilities and interest in electronics I learned when he studied in Essentials Studio that I had been coleading. I could count on the proper effect and I was not disappointed.

Supplementing the story of mothers borrowed from the archives, several dozens of pages from mothers’ chronicles were freely hung. They created cloud like object at the entrance to the hall.

Atmosphere in this hall was completed with soft blue lighting of the ship’s sides forming walls of this hall. Blue light sipping from below delicately faded just above the lower edge of the boards, which I have mentioned at the beginning of the description of hall no. 2. This has created a good emphasis and delicate separation from the background for the white „sail”-boards.

Remaining lighting requires short description, as it was a difficult task. On a ship, where no installations were provided, apart from several power outlets, I had to design and plan electrical installation for specific lights. Next stage was the choice of suitable light sources. Limited resources, which didn't allow me to buy professional lighting equipment, were the problem. Therefore I have decided to use the industrial atmosphere of the whole object and adopt industrial LED lights. Strength of the light, which they emit, had to be calculated, because I wanted to keep the twilight in the interior, to be able to emphasize important elements of the exposition with spot lighting. After choosing suitable power and look of the lights, diaphragms limiting the beam of light had to be designed. In order to do this I have made a prototype with which I was able to test the ranges of limits for the lighting. Each white vertical board had one dedicated light. After the tests I have commissioned the production of several dozens of simple, aluminium tin, painted in black, light housings. The style of the lamps was well suited to the atmosphere of the ship.

One important question remained – how to suspend the graphic carriers and lamps if we're not allowed to drill or bolt anything to the walls or the ceiling. A solution using steel sides of the ship and magnets came to the rescue, which I have mentioned at the beginning. Together with Paweł Gełesz we have designed supports made of suitably bent, steel flat bars, mounted to the wall with the use of strong, neodymium magnets. These supports held white fabric boards and light sources.

As I've mentioned before, seamless crossing from hall no.2 to hall no.3 was emphasized by the rhythms of the boards, so I wanted them to be identically suspended and lit. Thanks to the designed system of suspensions, we were able to achieve satisfying effect. This solution proved itself and held without breaking down for the time of exhibition's duration. (Img, drawing).

In both halls (no.2 and no.3) under the steel ceiling, in reality – steel cargo hold doors, a delicate, transparent material was suspended, also thanks to the magnets. This was another detail bonding both halls devoted to mothers, which was to give them ceremonial atmosphere.

Hall no.3

After entering the hall, the visitors' attention was captured by footage depicting ship's launch and the ceremonies connected with christening. The movie was screened in large format in the back of the hall on a white fabric closing its perspective. In this way a symmetrical complement of the two halls connected with passage was created. Extreme walls of each hall were ended with whiteness of the fabric on which black and white images from archive footages were flickering.

The hall's centreline, as emphasized by the movie projection, was elongated by another interactive object. It was a custom designed long table (width 1m, length 3m) with two benches on its sides where spectators could sit. In the table's top, tablet screens were installed (8 pieces). On each there were a different, couple of minutes long movie displayed; these were interviews with men of the sea or godmothers stories. Thanks to this the visitors could learn some of these stories almost personally. To see the videos one had to sit at the table. To emphasize the personal contact with the story, a telephone handset was used. One had to sit in front of the chosen screen, lean over the table and pick up the handset, to fully take advantage of the projection. Spectators sitting in this way at the table brought associations that they telephone someone who is far away. Men of the sea in the times before widespread use of the satellite or cellular communication, from time to time could talk to their close ones by radiotelephone. Handsets used for this installation were modern equipment, but their form connected them to old, heavy handset with characteristic spiral cord.

The "communication" table constituted the central element of the hall. On its left and right side, alongside the ship's sides – walls of the hall – white graphic mediums, which I mentioned earlier, were placed. At the portside (on the right, looking from entrance) five boards with images of 275 Godmothers of Ships of Owners of the Coast of Gdansk, were placed. This peculiar tableau shows photographic portraits of women cropped in circles, which was a reference to typical ship's portholes. Rhythmically placed portraits were supplemented with the names of mothers and the names of the christened ships.

On the other side, along the starboard, rhythm of another five boards emphasized the symmetry of the hall. On these boards, silhouettes of chosen women were placed, for example painter Józefa Wnukowa or actress Ryszarda Hanin, scientists and travellers. Information on the boards facilitated familiarization with stories of the times, when function of the Godmother was especially esteemed and important, showing political and historic background.

Achieving of the effect of symmetry in this hall was important to me, to give the exposition orderly image enabling focus on the silhouettes of Godmothers.

Complementing exposition in this hall was a painting authored by Józefa Wnukowa – Godmother, from the speakers one could hear original recordings of words accompanying ships christening ceremonies, spoken by Godmothers. In this hall a glass cabinet showcasing the original book-chronicles of Godmothers was also placed.

To leave this exposition hall and enter the next, last part of the exhibition, visitors had to descend again to the lowest deck using narrow stairs.

Hall no.4

It's the last expositional compartment of the exhibition. Its mood differs from the previous, muted and "pure" hall no.3. Hall no.4 is dynamic and quite contrast; I gave it a working name "the playroom".

On one hand the graphic boards tell about ships farewells and their last voyages, on the other hand – I wanted that "ships farewells" were not too melancholic. Therefore in this hall, elements serving interactive entertainment, geared towards the youngest visitors, were placed.

The playroom

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In the middle of the hall, stands designed for the youngest visitors, table with little seats, reminding of wharf bits. On the table, crayons and colouring books designed especially for the exhibition, showing various types of ships and cards with printed graphic teaching how to make paper boats, were placed. (Design: Maria Ropel-Mikołajczak).

For older children and adult visitors an electronic simulator of ship's launch was installed. On a large touchscreen, by changing different parameters one could decide of how the launch will go – from successful launch to the sinking of the ship. Another interactive game or rather summary of the impression of the ships christenings exhibition activity is the possibility to test oneself in the role of Godmother breaking the Champaign bottle on the ship's side. The bottle obviously does not contain any alcohol, nor does it really break, because it is made of reinforced rubber, but it is of natural size and is suspended on a rope. Visitor can grab it and throw it into the black wall, simulating fragment of the ship with painted on typical markings, which are normally placed on the ship's sides. When the bottle hits the "side", the speakers play the sound of breaking glass, sometimes applause and sometimes sound of disapproval when it misses the "side".

The game, as one could guess, proved to be very popular so much, that after a few months of the exhibition's continuation, the bottle had to have its range reduced and construction reinforced so it could still fulfil its role.

Another ludic element was the painting letting the visitor take a popular selfie or a picture with his head composed into the "Sołdek's" porthole.

Halls decoration was supplemented with models of ships of various types, from the collection of the National Maritime Museum in Gdansk. Less formal atmosphere of the hall was also emphasized by flags of the flag code used on the ships for signalling purposes and famous ships, as for example "Batory", ensigns, hung from the ceiling. Supplement of the exposition in hall no.4, its background, similarly to hall no.1, were blue-lit ship's sides; remaining elements were spotlighted with aforementioned LED lights. Fastening of the lights was done in such way not to violate the Museum Ship, with the help of clamps attached to the steel construction of the ceiling. This hall also didn't lack flat TV displays, emitting other archive footages, connected to the construction and use of the ships.

After ascending the stairs to the upper deck, spectator finishes watching "Mothers and Ships" exhibition, continuing to walk through historic ship to see its engine room, crew cabins and the open deck.

5. Summary

Summarizing "Mothers and Ships, spirit in the machine" exhibition's description I would like to mention a couple of things.

The exhibition enjoyed a large viewership. It was designed in such way so that it could serve the visitors in the period from June till the end of October 2015. In this period the exhibition was visited by thousands of spectators and it gained numerous favourable opinions in media (annex). A fact that the National Maritime Museum in Gdansk decided to extend the exhibition and with minor changes make it available to the visitors also for 2016 can be considered a success.

In my opinion design work done for this exhibition was a valuable experience. It was a good training of working out the most effective design methods in the face of time, technical and financial constraints. Quoted Adam Haupt's sentence about flexibility and adaptation of the designer, here, had its fulfilment; sometimes I was reaching its borders, testing how much one can fit in, and how much work to invest to adapt the conditions and co-operators or contractors.

I can't say with clear conscience, that I was able to fully realize my own design vision of the whole exposition, however I fully identify with exhibition, which was created. Because of the financial and time factors there was no possibility of realizing several interactive objects, which I envisioned in the initial design. These were e.g. "animated" books – depicting different types of ships launches, based on the well known principle of fast flipping of the pages, creating the animated effect. This concept suited me, as the spectator could "launch" a ship thanks to the work of his own hands – such was the planned animated illustration in the book. Other objects that were not in the exhibition, but could potentially enrich its reception, were hammocks, reminding the ones on the old ships. They were to be installed

in the last hall, where one could stay longer and listen to the tales of the sea. Also missing was one visual effect, which was to make the closed interior more unreal and create maritime atmosphere of the space. On the tulle fabric (this was used in the exposition) installed just below the ceiling in the upper compartments, delicate clouds were to flow on the sky. Video was even created and the effect seemed satisfying, however there were too few resources to purchase suitable equipment to project the clouds map; eventually I had to give up this idea.

These and other designs “supporting” the exposition were left on the paper or in visualizations, however the most important exhibition’s assumptions were realized.

In the austere interior of the old collier it was possible to create the story of exceptional relations of men and machines, of their almost intimate relationships. In such difficult space it was possible to build the spatial scenario of the exhibition in such way to guide the viewer through different aspects of these relationships, show different emotions and shades of mothering the ships.

For the record I will summarize here my chosen, most important tasks during the design of the exhibition and I will present the design team and its tasks.

Piotr Mikołajczak

designer of the “Mothers and Ships, the spirit in the machinery” exhibition

- Design of the general concept of the exhibition
- Design of the spatial and factual narrative of the exposition, based on the preliminary scenario conceived by the exhibition’s curator. The scenario outlined general issues that were to be displayed in the exhibition. I had to interpret, and develop them, saturate them visually give them form and arrange in space.
- Design of the exhibition’s equipment. This encompassed such furniture as: glass cabinets, tables, platforms, and canvas space dividers, look of the graphical carriers, to the details such as: lamps (together with the design of electric installation), design of the suspension and holders systems.
- Design of exposition’s graphical elements creating its image. Beside dividing the information between individual carriers and giving them their visual character it was, graphic design of most of them (with the exception of boards designed by other authors as previously mentioned in the text) Including the exhibition’s poster and invitation.
- Design of multimedia use during the exhibition.
- Design of the concept of interactive equipment for the exhibition – letting the viewers to create the atmosphere of the exhibition.
- Coordination of the design team, corrections of the designed graphic material
- Development of the cost estimate of the project

Design team of “Mothers and Ships, the spirit in the machinery” exhibition:

Paweł Gefesz – designer – support of exhibition’s concept development.

Development of the technical details, such as suspensions and graphic design of chosen expositional boards and other graphical elements e.g. floor.

Maciej Dojlitko – designer – graphic design of seven boards about ships history.

Paweł Świdorski – designer – graphic design of seven boards about “Sołdek’s” history.

Maria Ropel-Mikołajczak – designer – graphic design of kid’s materials, colouring books, paper origami.

Jakub Stojalowski – industrial design student – design support and realization of interactive equipment (voice tubes, radio, bottle).

Important persona of the whole exhibition was its curator **Tomasz Gruszkowski**, who fulfilled his role perfectly. He led a dialogue with me as the lead designer of the exhibition; he didn’t disturb the realization of daring design ideas but rather supported them. Materials, information, photographs or videos needed for the realization were prepared on time and in suitable quality. Factual support, talks between National Maritime Museum and design team and Mothers Club were also led very effectively. Mr Tomasz Gruszkowski also authored some of the videos displayed during the exhibition (for example interviews with Godmothers). He also took care of commissioning a musician who according to the suggestions, created soundtracks emphasizing the exposition’s atmosphere.

During the exhibition’s realization, two companies cooperated: Markoadvert – managed by Mr Paweł Markowski and PPUP Profil Tomasz Matysiak

Including

Grzegorz Zięcina – designer – realization of the lamp housings.

Sylwia Karwowska – industrial design student – treatment of photographs or expositional boards.

Piotr Mikołajczak

